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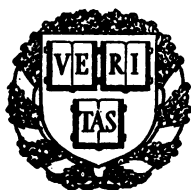
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*Shapley*

THE

First Annual Meeting

OF THE

CONTRIBUTORS

TO THE

(1)  
"Maine Farmers' Almanac,"

AT

HALLOWELL,

On the Second day of June, 1880.

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Reported by DANIEL R. WING, of *The Waterville Mail*.

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AUGUSTA:  
PRESS OF THE MAINE FARMERS' ALMANAC.  
1881.

# Roll of Contributors.

Adrian.	D. F. Coombs.	Wm. Hoover.	A. A. Myers.	Rlenzi.
Addie.	C. E. C.	Phillip Hoglan.	Myra.	Rupert.
F. A. Archer.	Dolly Duml'g.	Emma Heald.	M. S. B.	A. A. Robinson.
Anubis.	E. J. Daniels.	H. S. N.	Mrs. E. H.	Rolly Polly.
Axie.	F. A. Drew.	Haddon.	Elvira Myers.	Rusty.
Algebra.	C. H. Duren.	Hooper One.	Effie Myers.	A. C. Rich.
Americus.	Daniel.	U. G. Hussey.	Willie Myers.	E. F. Randall.
Aunt Jemima.	Diagoras.	H. T. M.	Bert Millett.	Tom Scott.
Ate.	Mrs. M. Davis.	Carrie Hyde.	M. Myers.	Silent.
Aunt Simpkins.	N. M. Damren.	H. F. M.	Alma Myers.	I. Scribner.
A. F. B.	Wm. McDavid.	F. B. Hussey.	Addie Myers.	J. A. Sewell.
A. B. & A. L.	F. I. Dont.	H. M. R.	Mary.	Saguntus.
Aunt Lois.	Delphimes.	Helios.	Willie C. Miller.	W. C. Swett.
Affie.	E. W. B.	Howitzer.	M. E. H.	Sphinx.
Aquila.	Eureka.	Isaetta.	Mina.	Ella L. Smith.
Charley Allen.	Elmer.	I-c-l-r.	J. S. G. M.	M. M. Spinney.
Gertie E. Ames.	Etta.	I. N. C.	Carrie May.	I. M. Siprelle.
A. J. L.	Madelline Erle.	Jack Tar.	Mayflower.	J. F. Sawyer.
Aster.	J. W. Eastman.	Jonah.	Mars.	J. F. Spaulding
Beulah.	Eugene.	Jen.	Noemus.	Stelle.
Black Hawk.	Ett F.	J. S. G.	F. E. Nimmo.	Stanley.
M. C. Bates.	E. J. Edmunds.	J. D. B. Y.	Norembea.	Sol.
F. Booker.	E. F. D.	J. B. Gillson.	Nebraska.	Saba.
O. Black.	E. G.	J. K. L.	F. L. Nickerson.	Jennie Sewall.
Har'ld F. Blake.	Ed. & Edna.	J. F. S.	Nathalie.	Selene.
A. N. Benner.	Emma.	J. E. T.	Nodrog.	Sibyl.
Blockhead.	J. Emerson.	Jennie Rose.	Nat.	Sleighbell.
Wm. G. Blair.	Euchre.	Juno.	Nim Park.	Tuus Amicus.
L. H. Bond.	E. O. G.	Ellas Keene.	Nonplus.	J. C. Taylor.
W. A. Bolton.	E. P. H.	O. B. Keene.	Nora Neville.	C. B. Tibbetts.
E. Barnes.	E. H.	UJesse Knisely.	A. F. Nutting.	H. R. Tinkham.
Board.	E. A. S.	H. J. Libby.	Old Lady.	M. E. Taylor.
Ed. Brown.	Elibus.	L. A. B.	O. K.	Two of Us.
Ben.	Ella.	L. C.	Otis.	Sarah Tyler.
B. L. H.	E. L.	L. F. L.	Olive Ray.	T. W. L.
Marcus Baker.	J. C. Friend.	F. E. Linwood.	O. H. L.	Tedie.
S. B. Bartlett.	Frank.	Belle C. Lane.	Orem.	Taqueris.
E. H. Bean.	A. E. Faught.	Lulu.	Ollie.	Uncle Tim.
B. C. N.	Florette.	J. T. L—ce.	Omar.	Uncle Sam.
Bill Twist.	Jack Frost.	C. A. Lander.	Omegar.	Uranus.
Calchas.	Florence.	B. C. Lane.	Old Man Jones.	V. A. S.
C. A. B.	Tom Garrity.	J. H. Lane.	Pythagoras.	Vesuvius.
Georgie Clark.	Carrie E. Geer.	E. L. Lane.	The Parson.	Vio.
Chip.	Garrie.	L. F. Lane.	F. L. Philbrick.	Vesta.
Carl.	Green P.	Lou.	Pedro.	V. A. Se.
C. T. Clark.	Verdant Green.	Luna.	Alice G. Priest.	Wake.
T. L. Cox.	Gipsey.	Leo.	P. B. I. R.	C. L. Weed.
S. G. Cagwin.	G. M. Greenlaw.	T. H. McL—n.	Pearl.	W. L. C.
Crispin.	O. A. & E. Gould.	Artem's Martin.	Peleg.	W. B. K.
Fellow Craft.	Gilpin.	H. Marie.	Polly.	W. B. J.
Cog Egg.	Grandmarm.	W. C. Myers.	Pearl Percy.	W. A. P.
C. D. W.	G. W. B.	H. G. Mank.	Miss Pemaquid.	Fred H. Watson
Castino.	C. B. Goding.	McFarland.	Querist.	L. E. Waltz.
Champion.	G. E. G.	L. E. M'Allister.	E. F. Roundy.	Watson.
Canonicus.	G. E. S.	Milton.	Joseph Rea.	W. McL.
C. M. E.	G. W. B. W.	Me & My Wife.	R. S. V. P.	W. W.
RL Cha'bourne.	Hurrah.	E. M. Myers.	Reux.	Wm. Willey.
Columbus.	H. O. B.	Me & Marm.	A. H. Reynolds.	Walpole.
Cassie May.	Harry.	Lizzie J. Head.	A. E. Myers.	Zeno.
C. R. C.	Selkirk.	M. E. L.	Rusinurbe.	Pedagogue.
Explorater.			Sinbad.	

# Maine Farmers' Almanac.

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## FIRST ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONTRIBUTORS.

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OUR acquaintance with the MAINE FARMERS' ALMANAC began in our childhood home, where it hung in the chimney corner, an oracle to be consulted as occasion arose. In our earliest years it was almost the only picture book within reach; its rude Calendar pictures still hang on memory's wall, and we have never quite forgiven the publishers for substituting the present mythological representations of the signs of the zodiac.\* Books were scarce in those early times, and with only the BIBLE, Hymn Book, Columbian Orator, American Preceptor, a Book of Sacred Extracts, the English Reader, Webster's Spelling Book, and the New Pleasing Spelling Book—at hand, and but few others—a boy hungry for reading, would not fail to pore over the

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\*The old Calendar cuts here referred to have been restored.

ALMANAC, and, as soon as he was old enough, try to solve its curious riddles and knotty questions.

Afterward, in the days of our apprenticeship, we entered the office of Glazier, Masters & Smith, No. 1 Kennebec Row, Hallowell, which was then the literary emporium of the Kennebec. Here we not only came in contact with the publishers of the Almanac, and had a hand in the mechanical part of its production, but we were privileged with a sight of the editor—DANIEL ROBINSON,—the man who spread out this rich intellectual feast, and, most wonderful of all, regulated the weather!

As we remember him, he was a quaint figure, with rustic aspect as though fresh from the fields, quiet and modest in his demeanor, and yet with a something in his presence that impressed you with the feeling that he was no common man. He had a wonderful eye, as was proper for one who had to watch the movements of the heavenly orbs and pry into futurity, that he might be able to foretell the weather. We found he was known to the old printers by the soubriquet of *Dog Eye*, and the liquid brilliancy of his optics justified the appellation.

He was a self cultured man, an experienced school teacher, of whom, as of Goldsmith's schoolmaster, it might have been said:—

“’Twas certain he could write, and cipher too,  
Lands he could measure, times and tides presage,  
And e'en the story ran — that he could gauge.”

He was a charming writer, and presented his thoughts in a style of pure old English; indeed, he looked like the walking frontispiece of a rare volume of old English Classics. He was a true man, and did not fill the pages of the Almanac with clippings from agricultural newspapers and reports, but with a proper sense of his responsibility, and a love for the work, wrote all that appeared

in his department. He had a rare and delicate humor, too, and we can yet see the roguish twinkle in his eye, as, looking up from his proof-reading with Col. Masters, he said,—“About eleven o'clock, isn't it?” He had noted the regularity with which an employee left the office at eleven and four o'clock, for refreshment for the inner man, as was the custom in those days.

Even with the little confidence we had come to have in the Almanac as a prognosticator of the weather, we confess we were shocked when we applied to the foreman, as to what we should do when the other matter for a Calendar page forbade the insertion of the weather predictions in the precise place where they were written, and he told us,—“Oh, that is of no consequence; get in as much of it as you can, and where you can, and omit the rest; the editor will not notice it.” And we doubt if he did, for the blunder of a boy, who accidentally entered snow for July, went through half the edition before it was noticed and corrected by a pressman.

This connection of ours with the Almanac and its makers, coupled with the fact that while in the office our name appeared in the list of those who had solved some of its mystical queries, prompted us, in our mention\* (editorially in the *Waterville Mail*,) of the proposed Convention of Contributors, to put in our claim which

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\* THE MAINE FARMERS' ALMANAC for 1880 is already in the field, and will be found for sale at the usual places. It still bears the imprint of those veteran publishers, Masters and Livermore, who this year issue a proclamation calling a meeting of the Contributors at . . . Hallowell, on the 2d of June, 1880. Various parts have been assigned to several veteran Contributors,—*Hurrah*, whom we know, being designated to deliver an Address of Welcome. Colonel, can't you let us in? We had a hand in making that Almanac over forty years ago in the days of the veteran Daniel,—whose quaint figure and sharp eye we recollect—and he entered us among the lucky guessers of some of his dark enigmas. It will no doubt be a pleasant occasion, and we hope both of the genial publishers will be able to be present.—*Waterville Mail*, October 10, 1879.

was promptly responded to, by an invitation to be present, signed by the "Two Colonels."

And thus it happened that on Wednesday of last week (June 2, 1880), we made our way to Hallowell with this errand in view. We had noticed on the train several marked men, and among them an old graduate of Waterville College, and we found these all had business in Hallowell. The College man shook our hand heartily, as we claimed his acquaintance, and gave it an extra and more energetic grasp when we frankly told him our errand.

"You are one of us, then," he said. "Why, hold on and let me introduce you; I am *V. A. S.*, here is *Noemus*, here is *Pythagoras*, here is *Pedro*,—and he went on with several more mysterious appellations.

Together we made our way to the Hallowell House, where we were heartily welcomed by the publishers, Colonel Andrew Masters, and Colonel D. P. Livermore. Others soon came in; *Hurrah*, (another Waterville College graduate,) *Calchas*, *Eureka*, *Columbus*, *A. E. Faught*, *Tom Scott*, *Fane F. Sawyer*, *Aunt Simpkins*, etc. And it was interesting to witness the greetings of those who had for years known each other in the brisk encounter of wits through the Almanac, and who now for the first time met face to face. *Aunt Simpkins* seemed to be a general favorite—partly from what they had learned of her keen intellect, and partly, perhaps, because they found her, not a spectacled old spinster, but a comely and interesting young lady.

After a short season for making acquaintance, and the interchange of social greetings, the meeting was called to order by *Aunt Simpkins*, and organized by the choice of *Eureka*, as President, and *Fennie F. Sawyer* as Secretary. *U. Jesse Knisely*, to whom had been

assigned the opening prayer, not being present, that item in the programme was omitted; and *Calchas* proceeded to call the Roll, the following only being present:—*Aunt Simpkins, Calchas, Noemus, Eureka, Elias Keene, V. A. S., Hurrah, A. E. Faught, Jane F. Sawyer, Columbus, Tom Scott, Pedro, Pythagoras, Daniel*,—with the two old publishers, Col. Masters and Col. Livermore, and the new one, Capt. Nash.

A letter from the Editor was read. He was absent, not from lack of interest, but kept away by press of business. He sent kind wishes to all, and hoped they would excuse him.

*Silent*, not being able to be present in body, sent her photograph, which was passed around for inspection. Though absent, she assured them, in a letter which was read, that her heart was with them. She had greatly desired to be with them, though aware that she would feel small, in the presence of such mighty champions. She sent a hearty hand shake for all; hoped *Aunt Simpkins*, had found out the real name of *R. S. V. P.*; did not claim to be a veteran, dating back only to 1857, her first communications being in another name, when *Moses Springer* and *Daniel Robinson* were the editors; she recalled the names of the old contributors, many of whom, with the editors, had passed on before, and indulged in touching and appropriate reflections. She wished to meet the present Editor, and enclosed her mite for the purpose of an appropriate present for him. With renewed regrets at not being able to be present, she closed with the hope that though unable to meet them below, she would meet them above.

*I. N. C.* also sent a letter of regrets, in which he paid a hearty tribute to the memory of *Mechanic*, testifying not only to his great mathematical abilities, but also to



his honesty, integrity, and nobility of soul. A practical Christian, guided by reason, he never knew fear and had no respect for Mrs. Grundy. Without pretension to wit he could on occasion make happy replies. Too philosophical to be a warm political partisan, he was yet a strong anti-slavery man and an earnest and consistent friend of temperance.

\* *Hurrah* was next called up for the Address of Welcome, and spoke substantially as follows:—

*Mr. Chairman and Fellow Contributors:*

While I cheerfully respond to the duty imposed upon me by the committee of arrangements by their chairman,—our *venerable* Aunt on my right—I am fully aware that I have been forestalled by numerous “addresses of welcome,” more eloquent than any words I can utter—eloquent in the warm grasp of the hand, the pleasant smile, and the beaming light of the eye, which I have seen interchanged among you.

Nevertheless I greet you warmly and welcome you to this the first meeting of the Contributors to the *Maine Farmers' Almanac*. Although we are few in number, yet we represent many,—not merely the contributors but the readers. We represent those coming not only from this region, not only from all over our glorious old State, not only from all New England, but as well—

“From where the stately Hudson floats the wealth of half the world,  
From where amid his clustered isles, Lake Huron's waters gleam,  
From where the Mississippi pours an unpolluted stream;  
From where Kentucky's fields of corn bend in the southern air,  
From broad Ohio's luscious vines, from Jersey's orchards fair;  
From where, between her fertile slopes, Nebraska's rivers run,  
From Pennsylvania's iron hills, from woody Oregon;”

in fine, from every clime in which can be found a son or daughter of Maine;—and to show *any* clime in which one

can not be found would puzzle the most adept of our puzzlers, to all of whom the dear old Almanac comes a welcome messenger.

In behalf of all its readers I greet you and thank you.

You make the Almanac to them a source of valuable information, while to yourselves it is a bond of union.

Though never meeting personally, and though even our real names may never be known to each other our Almanac names are as familiar as household words, and every name seems that of a friend, —and many, the names of friends from our early youth.

To me it happens, and I presume it does to all, that each year I resolve that in the next I will give more time to its study and be more prompt with my response. I hope for that leisure which we all expect to have in the coming years. We all, I have no doubt, look forward to the time when we shall have gathered our treasures and have an opportunity of passing our days in elegant leisure. One plants and adorns a plot of land whose beauties he expects to enjoy; another gathers together books with whose contents he expects to enrich his mind; and others gather other things, which they expect will be a comfort and a solace to them. But alas, the years glide on with silent feet, the silver threads gleam in our hair, and when, if ever, our treasures are gathered, Death stands in the midst to welcome us.

Amid our joyous greetings, we should not forget those who have gone from us, never to answer our roll call on earth. Tears to their memory are not unfitly mingled with our words of welcome. I had intended to speak somewhat at length of one of them, "*Mechanic*" of Wayne, whose friendship with me commenced in years long ago and continued until his death, a little more than a year ago; but the letter just read has anticipated me; still, I will add a few words to that.

He was a son of "Auld Scotia" and had many of the peculiarities of those sons. Uncompromising in his integrity, his perceptions of the right were intuitive. His son well says that he knew not what fear is. I never saw him in any situation to test his *physical* courage, but I do know that he possessed that more noble quality, *moral* courage, which enabled him to hold and declare his views of right and wrong against all comers, and under all circumstances.

As a Mathematician he was wonderful. In the solution of Geometrical problems and in the application of Algebra to Geometry, I do not know his superior, and I scarcely believe the world had his equal. Let it be remembered, too, that he had no advantages of the drill and discipline of a scholarly education, but that himself his own teacher, he wrought his results, unaided. The solution of one question should make him immortal among mathematicians. There is a problem, well known since my earliest recollection, in the application of Algebra to Geometry, whose solution was always understood to require an equation of the sixth degree. It was proposed and and such a solution given in a Mathematical Periodical published some twenty years since at Harvard University, under the auspices of its faculty; but "*Mechanic*" gave a Geometrical solution of it at once simple, ingenious and exceedingly beautiful.

But he has left us, and leaving us at the close of a long life, he has left us an example well worthy of imitation. And I refer to him not only to pay a just tribute to his memory, but to express the hope, that when we ourselves come to solve the great problem of death, like him we shall go down to our graves with a consciousness of life's duties well performed, and with a faith, undimmed by the shadow of a doubt, in a life unfettered by

these clogs of clay, "a life that knows no ending," but "eternal and in the heavens."

Comrades, I again welcome you to this gathering, believing not only that it will be productive of profit to us, in the present, but that friendships will here be formed, that will last as long as our lives shall last.

"So mote it be," said somebody, indicating that there were Masons in that nice little company, and then, after the hearty applause had ceased, *Noemus* was called upon for his Poem, which we are happy to give entire.

### POEM.

BY NOEMUS.

#### I.

Companions and friends, let me tender a greeting,  
Though most of you never have met me till now;  
The present occasion affords such a meeting  
As seldom the fates unto mortals allow.  
For here we behold an assembly collected  
From the North, from the South, from the East and the West,  
To meet in a manner we little expected,  
Till we finally meet in the home of the blest.

#### II.

The farmer, the lawyer, the merchant, physician,  
The Parson, and teacher have left their abodes,  
To meet in *Conjunction*, and not *Opposition*,  
To move in *Ascending*, not *Descending* nodes.  
But while here we assemble, as sisters and brothers,  
And have, through the *Almanac*, often joined hands,  
Yet each is a stranger to most of the others,  
And scarce one another's *true name* understands.

#### III.

So, I greet you, my friends, in the name of *Noemus*,  
Who flatly refuses himself to unmask;  
And whether outsiders ignore or esteem us,  
We care not a fig, for we never shall ask,—  
In our masks, we're Philosophers, Sages, and Heroes,—  
Even fabulous gods; but unmasked, without doubt,  
We, significant *figures*, might dwindle to *Zeros*,  
Feeling flatter than cheats, when trick is found out.

*Noah Barton*  
*a week ago* *Poe*

## IV.

In the name of the gods, then, let no one unmask us,  
 And expose to the world a less dignified name;  
 And pray, who, with a heart that is noble, can ask us  
 To lessen our chances of soaring to fame?—  
 In our ranks we have puzzlers, propounders, and quizzers?  
 Assuming the titles of goblins and elves,—  
 Some keener than briers, some sharper than scissors,  
 Cutting all in their way—cutting even themselves.

## V.

We have mathematicians, the best from the College,  
 Astronomers skilled, with their sextants at hand,  
 And scientists, highly renowned for their knowledge,  
 The wisest and best that are known in the land.  
 And, though all are not suns, there are bright luminaries;  
 Some primary planets—some satellites, too;—  
 Like your bard, they are "moony," with light that oft varies;  
 So, you see, all in all, we're a comical crew!

## VI.

And then in our ranks stand the "fair of creation,"—  
 All the mythical goddesses known far and near—  
 Shining forth in full blaze, like a bright constellation,—  
 Andromeda, Virgo, and Cassiopeia.  
 Their ingenuous propoundings are witty and weighty,  
 As evinced by the skill of *Elilbus* and *Lou*,  
*Old Lady*, *Aunt Simpkins*, *Jemima*, and *Ate*,  
 Whose tact and adroitness are equalled by few.

## VII.

Of the female propounders, *Amanda McFarland*  
 Bears the palm of the victor, as all must confess;  
 So, for chaplet of flowers, let us wreath her a garland,  
 With a trail to her skirt, "a yard long, more or less."  
 You'll remember how 'Manda, by Decapitations,  
 In the year 'seventy-eight, metamorphosed the "snail,"  
 And before she got through her transmogrifications,  
 Just to make the thing "ill," had "to double the —l."

## VIII.

But *Amanda*, we reckon as one to be dreaded;  
 Therefore, let her assailant look out for his pate;  
 For among the poor victims that she has beheaded,  
 The last one, we find, is a pious *Prelate*!—  
 Now, right here, let me give you a comical riddle,—  
 As I think of no subject, at present, more fit,—  
 And whether composed by—for rhyme's sake—Nick Biddle,  
 Or *Noemus*, no odds, if it sparkles with wit:

[Here followed a riddle in rhyme, which has not been  
 furnished for publication.]

IX.

You will pardon, I trust, this erratic digression,  
 As well as the Riddle I've stopped to rehearse;—  
 And so now, I'll return to our mystic Profession,  
 Some few of whose names I'll mention in verse;  
 For, since *all* the names of our Craft would be legion,  
 Extending from Kittery, north to Fort Kent,  
 We will mention those only, who're found in this region,—  
 Nor stop to go over a larger extent:

X.

We have *Crispin, Rienzi, Castino* and *Garrie*,  
*E. F. Roundy, Jack, Fellow Craft, Milton*, and *Frank*,  
*A. E. Faught, F. E. Linwood, John, Tom, Dick* and *Harry*,  
 With *Querist*, and *Rusinurbe*, witty and crank;  
*Myra, Pedro, Canonicus, Ben, Isa-etta*,  
*Dirigo, Anubis, Jen, Mayflower*, and *Board*,  
*J. C. Friend*, and *Jack Tar, David, Haddon, Floretta*;  
*Bill Twist, Ed* and *Edna* must not be ignored.

XI.

Ah! but where are the sages that started before us,  
 So astute with their tangents, arcs, secants and sines?  
 Raised above the broad canopy stretching out o'er us,  
 Where no clouds intervene—where the sun ever shines.  
 Though an Editor's left us, we'll cease to regret him,—  
 The star-gazing Titan, so keen with "one eye"—  
 For, with vision made perfect, their Author will let him  
 Inspect the vast orbs that revolve in the sky.

XII.

The old saw—*Sol occubit; nox nulla secuta est*,  
 Our two Editors shows—one with victory's crown,—  
 But, indeed, it is hard to tell which did his duty best—  
 As the latter sun rose, ere the former went down.  
 Now, *Mechanic*, whose problems were always a treat,  
 Has of late, with poor *Robinson*, gone to his rest;—  
 In Geometry, few with the *Scott* could compete,—  
 Although some, such as *Hurrah*, come up to the test.

XIII.

In Greek, we have *Helios, Selene*, and *Aster*,  
 Shining lights in our galaxy, with us to-day;—  
 May their "rays" ne'er diminish, but when they are cast here,  
 Quite equal in brightness, our own *Olive Ray*.  
 So, in Latin, we've *Sol*, with our *Luna* and *Stella*,  
 Here assembled with *Juno, Uranus*, and *Mars*;  
*Vesta, Leo, Aquila, Delphinus*, and *Ella*,—  
 Hence, you see, we've the light of the Sun, Moon and Stars.

## XIV.

Then, among other lights that demand our attention,  
 Is my honored old schoolmaster, *I-c-l-r*,  
 An old-time contributor, worthy a pension,  
 Having first shown as morning, *now* evening star.  
 And next let me mention the wandering tinker,  
 The erratical comet, our *W. B. K.*,  
 Whose deep cogitations denote him a thinker  
 Quite equal to most of our *savants*, to-day.

## XV.

We remember the quaint Magic Squares, by *Pythagoras*,  
 The Enigmas, the Puzzles, Conundrums and Puns,  
 By *Adrian*, *Zeno*, *Tom Scott*, and *Diagorus*,  
*Calchas*, *Algebra*, *Howitzer*, and other "great guns."  
 But to mention the host that were wont to amuse us,  
 Would require all *this* month, if not half of the next,  
 So, my honored companions will please to excuse us,  
 If the final "Amen" follows next to my text.

## XVI.

Let me just allude, in particular meter,  
 To a passage of Scripture—a theme for my song—  
 Where Sampson found "meat that came forth from the eater,"  
 And moreover, "sweetness came forth from the strong."  
 Thus it seems that old Sampson indulged in a riddle,  
 Away back in the earliest childhood of Time,—  
 Rose triumph with *wit*, *o'er the warl's weary widdle*,  
 Ere Homer or Virgil had scribbled a rhyme.

## XVII.

Now, this *Riddle* by Sampson, and *Fable* by Jotham,  
 As recorded in Judges, the Book styled divine,  
 Excel all the Tales of the Wise men of Gotham,  
 As far as those Tales excel these rhymes of mine.  
 But, while some queer conundrums the Bible discloses,  
 It is still the most wonderful Book ever known;  
 So, instead of a fling at "Mistakes made by Moses,"  
 We had better correct some mistakes of our own.

## XVIII.

But Sampson complained that they "ploughed with his heifer,"  
 Which led to contention and family strife,  
 But *now* the two sexes are seeming more clever,  
 As evinced by the signature, *Me and My Wife*,  
 And again it appears, the contributors, *Two of us*,  
 Must have been two "young lovers" of opposite sex,  
 For, in solving a problem, or puzzle, pray who of us  
 Would expect to find two of one gender annex?

XIX.

So, like Castor and Pollux, twin children of Leda,  
Contributors, lately, seem, moving in pairs,  
As we see in the case of our own *Ed and Edna*,  
Who move in conjunction to lighten their cares.  
But, not so, in the study of dry mathematics,  
Where to meet with success one must "go it alone,"—  
Slink away by himself into closets and attics,  
Away from the clatter and clack of the crone.

XX.

The mathematicians, from Athens to Cairo,—  
Some few of whose names I have here on the scroll,  
Will remember this axiom learned when a tyro :—  
"All the parts of a quantity equal the whole.  
But in calling the roll, if we leave out a "fraction"  
Of the "numbers" that stand, twixt the head and the foot,  
Just remember, my friends,—it is but by "extraction,"  
That of any known "power" we arrive at the "root."

XXI.

There are *Hurrah* and *Cagwin* and *U. Jesse Knisely*,  
*William Hoover*, *Saguntus*, *G. P.*, and *E. L.*,  
Whose solutions of problems are done so concisely,  
That for others, slight chances are left to excel.  
That *Pythagoras*, *Omar*, *Sphinx*, *Artemas Martin*,  
*Pedagogue* and *Eureka*, hard problems dispatch,—  
And as old ones step out, there are new ones to start in,  
Who, in point of acuteness, are often their match.

XXII.

We have had correspondents from old *Norombega*,  
Full many a star that vanished, long since,  
From *Alpha*, a list that extends to *Omega*,—  
Such as *Springer* and *Robinson*, *Eaton* and *Prince*.  
Although, in our years, there may seem a disparity,  
As well as in *taste*, erudition, and skill,  
Still, like *Old Man Jones* and *Little Tom Garrity*,  
Let us make no distinction, but work with a will.

XXIII.

But remember *this* day we regard as a *holiday*,  
With no jobs to commence, nor a breach to repair;  
So, if Jocus permits, we will make it a jolly day,  
Ignoring dull labor, and banishing care.  
Care fastens a nail, it is said, "in our coffin,"  
"But a *grin*," from the merry, "will draw the nail out ;"  
So we'll laugh and be merry, or leastwise, grin often,  
As the surest prevention of *dumps* and the *gout*.



## XXIV.

Away with the surly, old crusty curmudgeon,  
 Who fretteth his gizzard, until he is thin,  
 But a welcome to him who will merrily trudge on,  
 Keeping fresh on his phiz a perpetual grin.  
 For, Midas-like, he it is, turns all to gold,—  
 As the joker will smile, while the croaker will sigh,—  
 He rejoiceth alike in the hot and the cold,  
 And still laughs as he plods through the wet and the dry.

## XXV.

As our Earth wears two faces, the dark and the sunny,  
 While it rolls through the regions of infinite space,  
 So is man sad on one side—on t'other side funny,  
 So that sadness and fun are both proper, in place.  
 O, thou Jocus! gay god, ever mirthful and jolly,  
 Condescend to give joy to the woful, and sad;  
 Thou, alone, hast the power to divert Melancholy,—  
 Even make the disconsolate cheerful and glad.

## XXVI.

There is fun to be found in all things that we meet,  
 The smallest and greatest, the worst and the best;  
 We may find in this life a continual treat,  
 For in every speech there is room for a jest.  
 Be it ours to notice the crowds as they pass,  
 Ever cheering Mirth's banner, where ever it waves,—  
 To show up the fools through our spectacle glass,  
 And scourge, without mercy, the cheats and the knaves.

## XXVII.

Let the envious world, with a taunt and a ban,  
 Continue to clamor, persistent and hard,  
 Yet we'll laugh at their folly, and do what we can,  
 To show it unworthy our slightest regard.  
 For, whatever may happen, the man is in luck  
 Who is able an insult to turn into glee,—  
 Who can laugh at the villains, like Good-fellow Puck,  
 Crying out, "Oh, Great Lord! what fools some folks be."

## XXVIII.

But, THE MAINE FARMERS' ALMANAC! Grand institution!  
 Its birth antecedent to that of the State;  
 And still bound to continue, without dissolution,  
 Until every thing dies that is noble and great.  
 My old constant companion! when you go may I go,—  
 For, what then would be left, that is worthy our stay?  
 With no Almanac, surely we'd loose our *Dirigo*,  
 And, without a director, be groping our way.

XXIX.

With no Almanac, what should we know of the weather,  
 Since, to fathom the future, is out of our power?  
 But a Calendar column — a month all together, —  
 Read thus : *About this time — look out — for a shower !*  
 And the farmers — pray, what could they do at their farming,  
 Without aid from the Almanac, day after day,  
 To find what, in the Aspects and Nodes are alarming —  
 Thus escaping the danger of spoiling their hay.

XXX.

Then, again, the young mother, in "weaning the baby,"  
 Has to find the "Moon's place," and the name of the "sign,"  
 To prevent her "wee darling" from grieving, — and may be,  
 From hastening both to a state of decline.  
 Hence, we honor the editor's kind disposition,  
 In retaining his "weather-gauge," year after year,  
 For some are so hampered by old superstition,  
 They deserve our condolence, instead of a sneer.

XXXI.

There's another queer class about whom I've been thinking,  
 Fit subject, perhaps, for a pleasant lampoon,  
 Who declare that their pork in the pot will be shrinking,  
 If their pigs are not killed on the full of the moon.  
 And although such a whim to most people quite strange is,  
 Still, it shows how the Almanac makes a man sage,  
 Like the Man in the Moon, fast asleep in her changes,  
 Fulls, Risings and Settings, Eclipses, and Age.

XXXII.

It is *possible* some lackadaisical spooney,  
 May be jealous that we of the Moon are too fond;  
 But to such we reply : We are not quite so "moony,"  
 As to let her "attractions" bind us in a "bond."  
 While we know that *Miss Luna* is Earth's fairest daughter,  
 She, in all her flirtations, ne'er gets off the track,  
 And so generous, withal, when she gives us a "quarter,"  
 She, in making her "change," never takes "ascent" back.

XXXIII.

What's the *age* of *Miss Luna*? asks some mean bamboozler —  
 What's the *age* of *Old Lady*, and *Miss Verdant Green*? —  
 Then inquires — if *Aunt Simpkins* is old as Methuselah? —  
 If an old maid of sixty, or lass of sixteen? —  
 But when one can determine who's loser or winner,  
 By selecting a partner in *bal-masquerade*,  
 It is then, and not *till* then, th' inquisitive sinner  
 Can tell which, in her mask, ranks as girl or old maid.

## XXXIV.

Now, for sins of omission, may *Jennie F. Sawyer*  
 And others forgive me, as will *V. A. S.*,  
 My old school-day companion, the eminent lawyer,  
 Who's appointed to give us the closing Address.  
 Then I'll take my "departure," and "close" my "surveying,"  
 Having taken more "latitude" than was designed,  
 But at every "station" I'll ever keep praying:  
 "God bless all the world, and the rest of mankind."

## XXXV.

Then will God bless our *Masters* to whom we are debtors,  
 For the lessons imparted in Almanac lore,  
 And we'll faithfully serve them as aids and abettors,  
 Counting every *good* liver, as one *Liver-more*.  
 You may count on *Noemus*, if others forsake us,  
 To take charge of the "Craft," in the time of the *flood*,  
 Who has *Faught*, at the front, without having a fracas,  
 Nor among his competitors ever shed blood.

## XXXVI.

If *Noemus* should prove an unsafe navigator,  
 Or his "Ark" spring a leak, ere it nears the dry land,  
 We've *Columbus* who sailed his old craft, rather later,  
 And *Americus*, too, to assume the command.  
 And to make up the crew, we have *Selkirk* and *Jonah*,  
*Explorator*, old *Sinbad*, and jolly *Jack Tar*,  
 Who would stick to the "hull," till each "sail" was a "goner,"  
 And ride safe into port, without spanker, or spar!

## XXXVII.

We should offer three cheers for our faithful Committee,  
 Who have made the arrangements for meeting this day,  
 And whose praise should be sung in a worthier ditty,  
 Like the strains the Last Minstrel produced from his Lay.  
 And we'll hip, hip, *Hurrah!* for our talented speaker,  
 Who so honestly merits his world-wide renown,—  
 Who can shoot o'er the knottiest problems, *Eureka!*  
 Like the famed Archimedes o'er Hiero's crown.

## XXXVIII.

And in spite of all drawbacks, or whatever stops us,  
 May our *Calchas*, as *soothsayer*, long remain chief,  
 Nor find his superior, such as old "Mopsus,"  
 That shall cause him to die, like his namesake, with grief.  
 And may *Adrian*,—called by the Greeks, *Adrianus*,  
 As our chief "rhetorician," his studies pursue;  
 And with anagrams, puns, and charades entertain us,  
 And perfect the *five languages* taught in *Peru*.

XXXX.

Nor shall *Zeno*, our scribe, be accounted audacious,  
Should he, like the old Stoic whose fame has been sung,  
Give a hint to *Noemus* if over-loquacious,  
That a man has two ears, while he has but one tongue;  
Which implies that a man should hear much, and speak little,  
And the doctrine holds true, both in numbers and prose,—  
So, for fear I am keeping a *Friend* from his victual,  
I will straightway relieve you, and come to a close.

XL.

But we sadly regret that our poem, and riddle,  
Come so short of the mark that we all had in view;—  
For, like *T. H. McLain's* puzzle, that starts in the *middle*,  
We run *two ways, at once*, like the tongue of a shrew.  
In their scramble for *pelf*, let *extortioners* tussle,  
And exultingly boast of their ill-gotten gain;  
But, for *us*, let us "work" the "Designs" on the "Trestle,"  
And when tumbles the "Temple," *go down with the train!*

XLI.

In our passage through life, 'mid its racket and rumpus,  
A "due course" let us keep—raise our flag to the breeze—  
With an eye to "the star," for adjusting our "compass,"  
Let our "angles" consist of just "ninety degrees."  
Then we'll part on the "Square," as we met on the "Level,"  
And by our integrity ever stand fast,  
So that neither the "world," nor the "flesh" nor the "devil,"  
Shall allure us away from *Elysium* at last.

XLII.

Since our pleasures in this life are all "transitory,"  
And our glorious Sun rises only to set,  
So, until we're assembled in mansions of glory,  
Perhaps for the first, and the last time we've met.  
But we'll all lend our aid in the world's onward movement,  
Keeping clear of life's thorns, making most of its flowers.  
For the *Future* we'll trust, from the *Past* draw improvement,  
And act in the *Present*, that surely, is ours.

Enthusiastic applause followed, and then a vote of thanks to "*Noemus*" for his highly finished and wonderfully ingeniously constructed poem, which must have cost him much labor. It was the crowning exercise of this very pleasant occasion.

A little time was spent in the interchange of kindly greetings and pleasant social converse; and then they all adjourned to the dining hall.

After dinner they were again called to order and "*Hurrah*" acting Toast-master in place of "*Tom Scott*," who

had been appointed, proposed as the first toast—*The Maine Farmers' Almanac*. "V. A. S.," who was called to reply, said that the year 1818 was remarkable for two events—the birth of the *Maine Farmers' Almanac* and also of himself. In another particular he and the Almanac were alike—at first they were both small and of little account; but, growing together, he was free to confess that the Almanac had outstripped him. He had always thought much of the Almanac, and never looked into it without learning something new; but he proceeded in a very humorous talk to mention some things in the little book which he could not understand, and to explain the pictures at the head of the Calendar pages, interpreting their meaning in a way that "brought down the house" and provoked a good deal of laughter.

The second toast, — *Editors and Contributors*, — was responded to by *Noemus* as follows:—

I am inclined to think that the response to this Toast must have been assigned to *Noemus*, under a misapprehension, on the part of the Committee, without knowing, of course, at the time it was so assigned, that the Poem prepared for the occasion, was to be devoted almost exclusively, to the "Editors and Contributors of the Almanac." As it is,—

We can add but a trifle to what has been said  
Of our Editor living, and those that are dead,  
Who, in turn, have stood sentinel sixty-two years,  
Like a guard, keeping watch o'er the heavenly spheres,  
Calculating their distances, transits, and sizes,  
Of the Sun, Moon, and Planets,—and time that each rises,  
Keeping watch of the "weather," and "signs of the times,"  
And a thousand things else, too abstruse for our rhymes;—  
But this much we may say for our Editor present,  
May his life-work be long, and his life-journey pleasant;  
And, at last, when the Angel declares "Time no longer!"  
May his star-gazing vision grow keener and stronger.

And to our Fellow-Contributors we would say:

May they "*still live*," with earthly blessings rife,  
Nor meet "*oppressor's wrong*," nor "*law's delay*,"

"Along the cool sequestered vale of life,"

But "keep the noiseless tenor of their way;"

And may they ever bear in mind the Scriptural injunction: "Seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you;" or as *poetically* expressed:

"Attempt the end, and never stand to doubt;

Nothing's so hard but search will find it out."

The reply to the third toast,—*The Committee of Arrangements*, had been assigned to *Aunt Simpkins*, but at her request *Hurrah* responded for her in a brief but pertinent speech, in which he took occasion to extend the thanks of the company to the Committee of Arrangements,—*Adrian*, *Ate*, and *Aunt Simpkins*,—the latter of whom had given much time and labor to perfecting the arrangements. He closed with the inquiry—"Shall we have another meeting?" expressing himself heartily in favor of continuing what had been so well begun. To this all present expressed their hearty assent, and after discussion as to time and place, it was decided to meet in Hallowell on the 17th of June, 1881,—Capt. Nash having cordially invited them to do so, with a pledge to make everything agreeable to them.

A Committee of Arrangements was chosen, consisting of *Calchas*, *Aunt Simpkins*, (against her earnest protest though she would promise to be present,) and *Hurrah*.

These arrangements having been completed, *V. A. S.* gave his Valedictory Speech.

*Ladies and Gentlemen of this Convention:—*

By the arbitrary requirements of your Committee, I am required to say something to this assemblage of the witty and the wise, this collection of the puzzling contributors of the Almanac in the shape of a good-bye. It is further expected, that it shall be something that will send you away in a happy frame of mind, imbued with a good feeling toward each other, the world at large, and "the rest of mankind." At this stage of the proceedings nothing, of course, could be more conducive to

that effect than brevity, so *that* virtue shall receive due consideration. This taking leave business could not have been duly considered in committee. In order to have had a good send-off, it should have been undertaken by A. S. herself, for the reason, that being a woman, very naturally she would begin to talk best just at the time of taking leave. At the very time that we poor men have nothing to do but just put on hats and go away, the women can talk best and longest. But as it was very plainly intimated to me on receiving my invitation, that a refusal, or an excuse, would not be accepted or even considered, so I must labor to say what would be so easy and natural for her.

Were I better acquainted with those whose names have appeared in the list of our correspondents, and with those whose names continue to grace the pages of our department of the Almanac, it might not be inappropriate to say something of the past, of the history of those who have gone and left their names here; but as that is impossible, let us confine ourselves to what are always the realities of life,—the *present* and the *future*.

Our social meeting here to-day is the accomplished fact of the present. It is not in the probabilities of providential dispensations that we shall all meet again thus socially, and when we separate, it can only be in the reasonable expectation that our next meeting must be in a spiritual conference, (supposing that we have spirits,) in that sphere beyond the skies, (supposing there is such a sphere,) in another state of existence, (supposing there is such an existence,) in the enjoyment of as pleasant surroundings, (supposing we can realize such enjoyment.)

Now do not come to the immediate and very erroneous conclusion, by these suppositions, that I have a disbelief, that the intelligent minds of these contributors will cease to exist, or even be so swallowed up in the vast void of emptiness as to lose their identity. It may

be possible, as some affirm, that the desire generates the belief, that the "longing for immortality" implanted in the breasts of all sentient beings, is the child of the wish, but let us rest in the faith that we shall meet on that other shore,—that beginning of endless time and boundless space, and mayhap continue to send our annual tributes to the old Almanac, spiritually published by Masters and Livermore or their successors. Only let us fervently hope that if they do continue their publication as suggested, that wherever they set up their press, in the blank hereafter, it will be where the climate is not disagreeably sultry and arid.

We have had the great pleasure of meeting here together on this present occasion, we have had our social interchange of thoughts and greetings; most of all, we have seen the faces of those whose names have been so familiar to us, and have become "household words" in almost every family in Maine. We shall carry to our homes pleasant remembrances of the personal acquaintances we have this day made. Our correspondence with each other through the Almanac will be more enjoyable, and will be carried on with greater zest and satisfaction. In our leave-taking, let us each extend our thanks to all others for their attendance on this pleasant occasion; and more particularly, may we express our thanks and kind regards to the publishers, for their entertainment, and their ready assistance in making this meeting so successful.

Let us send a friendly greeting to those correspondents who, through pressure of business, were unable to meet with us here; sympathy to those who were kept away by sickness; and gentle rebuke to such as remained away without a reasonable excuse.

As we are now about to separate, in bidding you farewell, permit me to say what each one will say to every other, that you have my earnest and heartfelt wishes for your happiness in life, and success in all your pursuits.



In your intercourse with the world may your names be synonyms of honor and integrity, and when overtaken by old age, may the cares of life rest lightly upon you, and may loving hands and tender hearts be ever a ready shield from the storms of adversity; and finally, when the last requiem has been sung, may it be inscribed on monumental stone that you were one of the Contributors to THE MAINE FARMERS' ALMANAC.

And he presented the following Resolutions, which were unanimously adopted :—

*Resolved*, That we tender our sincerest thanks to Messrs. Masters & Livermore for past kindness, and that we regret to learn that they have closed their connection with the Maine Farmers' Almanac. In whatever business they engage our hearty wishes for their success will follow them.

*Resolved*, That we recognize in Capt. C. E. Nash, a gentleman fully competent to succeed the late publishers, and pledge him our sympathy and support as far as we are able.

*Resolved*, That we tender our thanks to the Committee of Arrangements, and especially to *Aunt Simpkins*, for the zealous and faithful manner in which they have discharged the duties imposed upon them.

The time to separate came all too soon, and with many hearty hand-shakes and kind wishes for each others' welfare, the pleasant gathering broke up. To none, perhaps, was the occasion more gratifying than to the old proprietors of the Almanac; and Col. Masters said privately, that taking those present as fair samples of the others, he was truly proud of the great army of Contributors to the MAINE FARMERS' ALMANAC.

THE  
Second Annual Meeting  
OF THE  
CONTRIBUTORS  
TO THE  
Maine Farmers' Almanac,  
AT  
HALLOWELL,  
On the 17th of June, A. D., 1881.

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Reported by DANIEL R. WING, of *The Waterville Mail*.

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AUGUSTA:  
PRESS OF THE MAINE FARMERS' ALMANAC.  
1881.



# Maine Farmers' Almanac.

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## SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONTRIBUTORS.

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FOR the second time the contributors of the MAINE FARMERS' ALMANAC met in convention in the parlors of the Hallöwell House in Hallowell, the meeting in 1881 being held on Friday, June 17th, the anniversary of the battle of Bunker Hill. The number present was about the same as at the first convention, but they were not all the same individuals. While it was pleasant to greet new friends, we sadly missed the old familiar faces—the genial, whole-souled *Hurrah*, the sedate *Pythagoras*, the youthful *Pedro*, the sprightly *Aunt Simpkins*, *Jane F. Sawyer*, *Columbus*, etc. The venerable ex-publishers, Col. Andrew Masters and Col. D. P. Livermore, were both present to extend hearty greetings to the contributors, and looking not a day older than when last we met. Capt. Nash, the new publisher, was also present, and gave a cordial welcome to all comers.

After the interchange of kindly greetings and a little social converse, the meeting was called to order by *Calchas*, Chairman of the Committee of Arrangements. The number present being small, it was thought best to omit the roll call, but the following responded to their names: *Noemus*, *J. C. Friend*, *Calchas*, *A. E. Faught*, *Adrian*, *Eureka*, *Silent*, *Tom Scott*, *Zeno*, *R. D. W.*, *Elias Keene*.

*A. E. Faught*, was chosen Chairman of the convention, and on entering upon his duties made the following brief opening address.

**Opening Address by "A. E. Faught."**

*Brothers and Sisters of Almanac Fame:—*

Please to accept my thanks for the honor conferred upon me, by being called to preside over your convention to-day. I will endeavor to perform the duties of presiding officer to the best of my ability; and only hope to be able to serve you in a satisfactory manner.

In meeting here at this, our second reunion, I will say, that I am most happy to see so many of our old friends of the Almanac.

So long ago as 1868, or 1869, I made a request — and it was referred to in the Almanac of 1869, a proposition for a convention or a parliament at Hallowell in 1870, either in May or June. For particulars see Almanac for 1869. I had long felt that I would like to see, face to face, such persons as *Adrian*, *Americus*, *Calchas*, *Noemus*, *Hurrah*, *Rienzi*, *Eureka*, *T. H. McLain*, *J. C. Friend*, *I-c-l-r*, *Tom Scott*, *Jane F. Sawyer*, *Aunt Simpkins*, and a host of others. I even had gone so far as to picture in my mind, just how they would look. I have found

some of them quite near to my fancy, since meeting them; and many others who seemed entirely different.

The proposed convention of 1870, was thought by many to be almost an impossibility and consequently it was passed over until 1880, ten years after the first proposition; and I certainly am happy to be able to be here to-day at the second reunion of the Almanac Fraternity.

*R. D. W.*, was chosen Secretary, and then *Eureka*, to whom the task had been assigned, presented the following Address of Welcome.

Address of Welcome by "Eureka."

*Mr. Chairman and Fellow Contributors:—*

I was much surprised when I learned from the pen of the chairman of the committee of arrangements, that this post was assigned to me; that one wholly unacquainted with matters of this kind should be chosen while the ranks of this corps of contributors are full of able and eloquent public speakers. Yet I cheerfully submit to the duty assigned, and cordially greet you at this, your second annual reunion; and welcome you to its deliberations, its social converse and interchange of friendly greetings. We have arrived at another milestone in life's onward march and the intervening months since last we met are now counted with the years that are behind us. I have made diligent inquiry but do not learn that any of our comrades have fallen during the last year; which should fill us with gratitude to God for the preserving care which a Divine providence has exercised over us; and at this hour a goodly number are in attendance. But what force has brought this band together and holds it with a cohesive

and sympathetic power? No pecuniary interest has drawn you to this spot; no constitution and by-laws command your attendance and prescribe your duties; but an emotion largely fraternal has caused this spontaneous uprising and assembling at this ancient and classic city, the puzzlers' Mecca, and an increasing affection for the Maine Farmers' Almanac that has greeted us annually as the years have gone by. Comrades, one and all, as there is much that will interest you deeply forthcoming in this convention, and for which there is an insufficiency of time I will close, and again heartily welcome you to this meeting, trusting that we shall receive much profit and that our happiness will be complete.

“And we'll lend our aid in the world's onward movement,  
Keeping clear of life's thorns, making most of its flowers;  
For the future we'll trust, from the past draw improvement,  
And act in the present, that surely is ours.”



# Historical Address.

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By "R. D. W.," (Daniel R. Wing, of the Waterville Mail.)

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R. D. W., being called upon, read the following Historical Paper.

Though greatly surprised, I confess I felt flattered when notified by *Hurrah*, that it was the desire of the committee of the contributors of the *Maine Farmers' Almanac* that I should deliver a Historical Address on this occasion; but being an old friend and former neighbor of mine, he knew what the response would be to the request thus phrased, and so he artfully added, "or, if you are alarmed at the words, 'Historical Address,' will you *read* a historical paper, at the next meeting?"

Now here was a distinction *with a difference*, you perceive, and thus the artful lawyer caught me with guile; though truth compels me to admit that he had a powerful ally within my own breast, a desire to live in memory after passing from earth; for here was a chance that my humble name, coupled as it would be with that of the **MAINE FARMERS' ALMANAC**, would go down to the latest ages of time. And thus it was that, like the insignificant fly in the fable, thinking only of the great dust we should together make, I weakly consented to stand



in this responsible position, though I have since bitterly repented, not so much on account of the labor involved, as for the reason that all through my task I have been haunted by the conviction that it should have been committed to abler hands. But such as I have been able to make it, I present it to you, bespeaking your kind indulgence.

It might not unreasonably be expected, that, emulating the example of that venerable and veracious historian of New York, Diedrich Knickerbocker, I should begin this important work, assigned me by your partiality, by endeavoring to account for the origin of all things, giving you a new theory of the Cosmos—with a big C; but time forbids. For the same reason I will also spare you a long and learned definition of the word, *Almanac*, with its derivation, all freshly forked out of the Dictionary and Encyclopædia. My researches in this direction soon showed me that, under the most liberal construction, we, and the department we represent, are not absolutely essential to the make-up of an Almanac; but that our department is simply an appurtenance—an afterthought.

But those who put on this appendage, built wisely; for what portion of this little annual gives it its great favor with the people and wins life long friends? Why is it bought and paid for, when scores of others may be had at every corner, without money and without price? Why does the homesick son of Maine in all latitudes and longitudes, where the astronomical tables, the weather predictions, and all other matters that pertain to an almanac proper, are alike valueless—why does he insist on having it sent to him in his new far away home? Why indeed, but for this same accidental Contributors' Department, and the genial notes of the editor?

But to my task. The venerable Maine Farmers' Almanac, which antedates the State by a year—how

came it to be? It was evolved from the brain of Mr. Ezekiel Goodale, a book binder by trade, who came from Oakham, Worcester Co., Mass., and established the first bookstore and bindery in Hallowell, in 1797, Col. Masters thinks; but certainly as early as 1800. To these, he added a printing office in 1814, and with the aid of Mr. James Burton, a practical printer, established a newspaper, the *Hallowell Gazette*, Federal in politics, which lived about twenty years.

As business began to revive from the depression occasioned by the war of 1812-15, men pushed out into new enterprises, on untried fields; and Mr. Goodale, who had been selling large numbers of Thomas's Almanac, published in Boston, conceived the idea that he might establish one of his own, and thus make greater sales and double profits. The first number, that for 1819, I have not been able to get sight of, but it must have been a rude affair, mechanically, for, doubtful of the success of his undertaking, its founder would not venture to purchase the needed column rules in Philadelphia, then the only type foundry in America, but used home-made ones instead, cut from old brass kettles by Dea. Daniel Dole, of blessed memory; and it was not until 1828, that the pages were enclosed with double rule, as you see them to-day. The only picture in those early numbers, before Mr. Robinson's term of service began, was that of an eagle on the title page.

Many were ready to laugh at Mr. Goodale, for his Quixotic enterprise, and to predict a disastrous failure; but, being blessed with great energy, he pushed on in the face of many difficulties; and though for a long time it was up hill work, the Almanac steadily grew in favor. And it has continued to do so to the present time, until from an edition of four or five thousand, with which it be-

gan, it has increased to 40,000; and this, although almanacs of all sorts—comic, religious, mercantile, medical, advertising, illustrated—have covered the land as the frogs covered Egypt; and many of them are given away every year by hundreds of thousands.

In 1820, Mr. Goodale, of whom I have told you all I know, associated with himself Andrew Masters, and Franklin Glazier, the firm taking the name of Goodale, Glazier & Co. Mr. Masters, who was a practical printer, having learned his trade with C. Norris & Co., of Exeter, N. H., came to Hallowell in 1815, and occupied the place made vacant by the retirement of Mr. Burton. From that time to 1880, when the establishment was sold to Capt. Nash, he was always at his post, a substantial pillar in that well known publishing house, which for so many years had its headquarters in No. 1, Kennebec Row, and did so much by its enterprise and honorable dealing to win a good name for old Hallowell. And he walked so correctly and lived so uprightly, taking nice care of mind and body, that he was able to attend to business and do a good day's work at the case up to the time he disposed of his interest. It is not so much hard work that kills men as fret and worry, and by avoiding unnecessary friction, Col. Masters is now, at the age of 88, a well preserved man, with form unbent, with eye undimmed, and heart unchilled, able still to relish life while the sun declines. Long may he be spared to enjoy the respect and esteem of his fellow citizens and to grace the annual gatherings of the Contributors of the Maine Farmers' Almanac.

In 1825, Mr. Goodale died, and his place was taken by Mr. John Merrick, the name of the firm being changed to Glazier & Co. In 1828, Mr. Justin E. Smith, a native of Hallowell, where he has always resided, came

into the firm though the bookstore, in which he had been employed as clerk, and Mr. Merrick retired, — the firm name being changed to Glazier, Masters and Smith.

In 1857, Mr. Glazier, who had not the equable temperament of Col. Masters, retired from the firm, and died June 9, 1863, at the age of 64. He was a native of Vermont, a nephew of Mr. Goodale, who brought him up and taught him the bookbinder's trade. His place was taken by Col. D. P. Livermore, a native of Jay Point, now Canton, who was born Dec. 20, 1804, came or was brought to Hallowell in 1806, learned the trade of printer in the American Advocate office, under S. K. Gilman, and afterwards under Calvin Spaulding, with whom for awhile he was part proprietor. Always a live, genial man, inclined to look upon the bright side and to enjoy life as he goes along, he is still vigorous in body and young in heart. Many years of happy old age, we trust, are in store for him. The name of the firm, on his entrance, was changed to Masters, Smith & Co., and this was retained until 1871, when Mr. Smith disposed of his interest to his partners, and entered the Northern National Bank in his native city, of which he is now President. On the retirement of Mr. Smith, the firm name was changed to Masters & Livermore, and this was retained until May, 1880, when the two veteran publishers disposed of their whole business to Capt. Chas. E. Nash, of Augusta, son-in-law of Col. Livermore. Capt. Nash learned the printing business in Hallowell; served two years in the army, where he got the military title he wears; was publisher of the *Hallowell Cultivator* for awhile, and for several years a member of the firm of Sprague, Owen & Nash, publishers of the *Kennebec Journal*, served as Mayor of Augusta for four years, and says he is "now out of politics, and trying to behave as

becometh a publisher of the Maine Farmers' Almanac ;" and that you will all agree, will be well enough, if he carefully patterns after the examples of his worthy predecessors. In 1881, Capt. Nash removed his publishing house to Augusta, but we learn that the Almanac will continue to be dated at Hallowell.

Now for the editors of the Almanac. Its first one was Moses Springer, Jr., who lived in Gardiner where he was at one time in the employ of R. H. Gardiner, Esq. He was a Methodist preacher, compiled a hymn book entitled "Songs of Zion" and occasionally lectured on astronomy ; was afterward connected with the National Observatory, in Washington, and died about 1870, either in Washington, or in Connecticut where one of his sons lived. Of his labor on the Almanac, I cannot judge, never having seen those early numbers. I am told, however, that he gave good satisfaction, especially in the astronomical department, a portion of the literary work being done by others—Dr. Benj. Vaughan, of Hallowell, contributing many agricultural articles. Mr. Springer edited the Almanac for three years, and was succeeded by Daniel Robinson of West Gardiner, in 1822.

The number for 1823, the second of Mr. Robinson's and the oldest one I have been able to find, shows that the editor's department, though enlarged, was yet circumscribed, and he occupied a divided throne, the opening address being evidently written by another hand and signed by the publishers. It is not until 1825, that the opening address is dated at Gardiner, and not until 1826 that Mr. Robinson appends his own initials to it. The editor, however, had a hearty New Year's Greeting in the Farmer's Calendar for January.

The number for 1823 contains those good old pictures of New England farm life, which never ought to have been banished, and in addition to the usual calendar pages, it has tables of military fines, yearly and quarterly meetings of Friends in New England, College vacations, Tide Table, Sessions of Courts, agricultural matter, mail routes, with list of inn-keepers, &c. Of the Contributors' Department, occupied with humorous matter, riddles, mathematical problems, etc., only half a page remains, one leaf having been destroyed. In this we find the names of the following contributors: *Democritus*, *G. L.* of Litchfield, *Tim Trifler*, and *Querist*. In 1824, which is complete, the list of contributors is only enlarged by the addition of *Tyro*, *G. S.*, *B. T.*, *Rupert*, *M. H.*, *N. L.*, *H. S.*, *R. S.*, *N. G.*, and *B. K.*

In 1849, new cuts, with slight changes, and still retaining the characteristics of the old ones were put in; but in 1859, a radical change was made, and the present ones adopted, retaining only the old familiar one on the title page.

Mr. Robinson edited the Almanac forty-two years; but when it was time to furnish the copy for 1865, he sent word to the publishers that he was unable to go on any longer, and he wrote no more for it, though he lingered in feeble health until May, 1866. Of his life and labors I shall speak more particularly farther on.

In their emergency the publishers secured Mr. Charles B. Chase, then teacher of a Family School for Boys in Hallowell, as Mr. Robinson's successor. Of this gentleman I have only learned that he labored very acceptably to the publishers, for two years, when he removed to Waltham, Mass., where he taught awhile and then went to Ohio.

There is no mention in Mr. Chase's first number of any change of editors, nor of the condition of Mr. Robin-

son's health ; but in passing from 1864 to 1865, one feels as he would in stepping into a desolated home, from which the master has been removed ; the familiar belongings of the house are there ; the other members of the family are present ; but the presiding spirit has vanished, and it is not the same home you formerly visited. The old contributors needed not that significant intimation on the title page, "*Formerly* edited by Daniel Robinson," to know that the hand of the master was not in it.

Mr. Hobart W. Richardson succeeded Mr. Chase in 1867, and filled the place of editor for eight years. The publishers say he was very capable and efficient in the place, while he had time to attend to its duties himself ; but pressure of other business compelled him to delegate a part of his work to another person, who made a sad blunder in his record of the moon's changes through the year, — a slip which their rivals were quick to discover and proclaim, much to the mortification of the publishers. The literary portion of the Almanac, under Mr. Richardson, was admirably done. Realizing that Mr. Robinson had stamped a certain character upon the Almanac, or, as he phrased it, "cast it in a certain mould," which was excellent in itself, and had won favor with the public, he was wise enough to follow the pattern marked out, and to enter into hearty sympathy with his venerable predecessor, putting himself in his place as far as he could. Mr. Richardson served two years in the office of the *Waterville Mail*, as an apprentice at the printing business ; he then completed his fitting and entered Waterville College, from which he graduated with honor in 1853. From '55 to '62 he filled the office of Tutor in that institution very acceptably. Afterward he removed to Portland and found congenial employment in connection with several of the newspapers in that city, and has for sev-

eral years been the able editor of that excellent independent paper, the *Portland Advertiser*.

Mr. Richardson was succeeded by Mr. Charles Fish, then Principal of the Hallowell High School, and afterward Preceptor of the Academy in that city, and then Assistant Teacher in the Classical School. He is now Principal of the High School in Oldtown. Of the good work he has done on the Almanac, I need say nothing, it being so recent and fresh in your minds, beyond this, that it has the hearty commendation of the publishers, old and new.

Now a word for the contributors, who have wonderfully multiplied since the humble beginning in 1819. The files of the Almanac being imperfect, I will not attempt to give even a list of those enumerated by *Noemus* in his last year's poem, with the date of their entrance into the company, but I will name a few, asking that all errors may be corrected, and suggesting that all present, whose names are omitted, should record them with the publisher at this meeting. *Alexander Selkirk* and *Sancho Panza* began in 1828; *Zeno* in 1829; *I-c-l-r*, *Americus*, *Noemus* and *Columbus* in '34; *Mechanic* in '42; *Jack* in '43; *Adrian* in '48; *Silence*, *Calchas* and *Hurrah*—"Hurrah, the beloved," Mr. Robinson styles him—in '49; *Tom Scott* and *T. H. McLain* in '62; *Eureka* in '65; *U. Fesse Knisely*, *E. Keene*, *Rusinurbe* and *Old Lady* in '70; *Aunt Simpkins* in '73; *Tom*, *Ate*, *Sam*, *Two of Us*, *Tom Garrity* and *Diagoras* in '74; *Algebra*, *Verdant Green* and *Jane F. Sawyer* in '75; *Jack Tar*, *Amanda M. Farland*, *Pedro* and *Isaetta* in '77; *Aunt Femima*, *Me and My Wife* and *V. A. S.*, in '78.

The first proposition for a meeting of the contributors was made by A. E. Faught in 1869; and the first meet-



ing was held June 21, 1880, the sayings and doings of which were all printed in a book. To this let me add that since that meeting the publishing office has been removed to Augusta.

And now allow me to follow the promptings of my own heart and devote the remainder of this paper, which is already too long, to the man who did more to make the Almanac what it has been and is, and to gather around it its numerous friends, than all others who have had to do with it—more even than the publishers, staunch and true though they have been—who showed that they properly appreciated his value and knew that his was a name to conjure with, by retaining it upon the title page to this day. This portion of the work, very fortunately, is all done to my hand. And I will first present the announcement of his death in the Editor's Notes, for 1867; the first year of Mr. Richardson's term.

“Are you all here? If so answer to your names, but not too loud . . . Welcome all, but tread softly and speak low. For the old friend, who for almost fifty years entertained us with quaint wit and instructed us with shrewd wisdom, appearing annually in their pages as regularly as the sun in his courses approached the winter signs, is gathered to his fathers and no longer marks the rising and setting of the sun, or the changes of the moon. What needs to be said concerning his modest and peaceful and quietly laborious life, you will gladly gather from the following sketch, from the hand of one who knew and loved him well.

*Died* in Farmingdale, at the residence of his son-in-law, Capt. E. Titcomb, May 18, 1866, DANIEL ROBINSON, of West Gardiner, in the 90th year of his age.

He was born in Gloucester, Mass., April 8, 1777, and was the nearest living descendant of Rev. John Rob-

inson, Pastor of the Leyden Puritans and Plymouth Pilgrims, being the sixth <sup>generation</sup> in a direct line from that good and honored man. Mr. Robinson was almost wholly self-made and self-taught, as his father died in Halifax, a prisoner of war, the year of his birth, and he, in consequence, was, at an early age, thrown upon his own resources. With a delicate physical organization, but a strong and powerful mind, and an unconquerable thirst for knowledge, almost unaided, he became the possessor of great literary and scientific acquirements. Diffidence and distrust of his own powers, alone, prevented his filling the Professor's chair. For many years he was an acceptable teacher in the State of New York. He came to Maine about 1812, and for several years followed his favorite profession of teaching in this, the State of his adoption.

In 1822, he first began to edit the Maine Farmer's Almanac, and continued to edit it for 42 years, loving his work, and forming many warm and enduring friendships with his correspondents. He was a Christian, a scholar, and a gentleman, and most respected where best known. His religion was of the strict, self-denying type, which floated across the waters in the old "May Flower," two hundred years ago,—true and genuine to the last.

During his life, he never, in the memory of his children, was for one day confined to his bed from illness, or called in the aid of a physician. His last sickness was brief and painless, as might have been expected from his temperate living and regular habits. He was around, as usual, and used his pen for the last time the day of his death; then came a gentle sinking of every faculty for a few hours, and the immortal spirit returned to God who gave it.

His beloved wife, his companion for 60 years, passed away 36 hours before him, and they were buried in one grave. "So he passed away," adds the new editor, Mr. Richardson, "full of years and honors; the Almanac, so long the object of his care, is still cast in the mould which he devised for it."

A year before his retirement from the Almanac a report of his death had become current in certain quarters, and in his editorial notes for 1864 he takes occasion to say: "*F. A. A. H.*, of Livermore Falls, we sincerely thank for his courteousness and kind expressions, and assure him that the folks in that section of the country, who 'say that the venerable Daniel Robinson is long since deceased,' are rather misinformed in the matter; for although nearly eighty-seven years of age, he still, through the ordination of an All-wise Creator, is permitted yet to survive." And apparently with the conviction that the end was not far off, he closes with the following benediction: "May all the blessings of benignant heaven fall upon their [the contributors'] heads, and possess their hearts, and overflow their minds with wisdom and genius, and fill their souls with charity, love and peace, 'the peace of God which passeth all understanding.'" And these very fitting words were the last he ever penned for the Almanac.

In the number for 1857, in response to the inquiry of a correspondent, Mr. Robinson gives the following particulars of his life history: "We were born in the town of Gloucester, Mass., on the 8th day of April, 1777, a lineal descendant of the youngest son (John Robinson) of Rev. John Robinson, the highly esteemed pastor of the truly *noble* band of the English Puritan Pilgrims of Leyden in Holland; who, after the early decease, in his fiftieth year, of his blessed father, came, with his wid-

owed mother and her family, and the second company of the emigrant Pilgrim Church, to the new settlement at Plymouth, in New England; and who, thereafter, joined with a party of the Pilgrims which repaired to Cape Ann and began a Plantation there, that, in after years, was incorporated into the town of Gloucester. I was born a Son of Freedom; for the glorious patriots and sages of our Colonial Country, had, prior to my birth, earnestly and undauntedly declared it to be *free* and *Independent*. My paternal grandfather's name was Abraham (a farmer, and a shoemaker, and fisherman!) and such was his grandfather's name who lived to the great age of 102 years. My father, Ezekiel, and his youngest brother, Daniel, both boldly attested to the truth and justice of the Declaration of Independence, when, at the American *Pass of Thermopylae*, the furious contest in the battle of Breed's or Bunker's Hill, they resolutely struck for right and liberty; their eldest brother, Jonathan, I think, was not there. My mother was a daughter of Samuel Tarbox, a native of Wenham, Mass., who in early life settled in Gloucester; he was a ship and house joiner and an inn-holder. Near the close of the year of my birth my father, when on a homeward bound voyage from Virginia, was captured by an English cruiser, taken into Halifax, N. S., and there with the whole crew, imprisoned. In prison he sickened, and suffered, and died, at the early age of 37 years—neglected, untended, uncared for. Such were the tender mercies of the satellites of power, such are the philanthropy and benevolence of the myrmidons of tyranny, puffed up with a little brief authority, at all times and in all places. My bereaved mother, a feeble widow with four young children, and in destitute circumstances, opened a private school, (by the advice of friends) and kept a little grocery; but was finally

necessitated to separate her children. My eldest brother, Ezekiel, she intrusted to the kind guardianship of her eldest brother, Samuel Tarbox, a carpenter and farmer, then settled in New Gloucester, Maine; her eldest child, a daughter, Mary Hiller, she retained with her, who became a cripple, but survived to the age of 27; my second brother, William Tarbox, was taken into the family of Capt. Benj. Somes, a marriage connection, and an inn-keeper; and when about 16 years old, became a clerk in a store of a family connection, Major Fred Gilman, (father of the Rev. Dr. Samuel Gilman, now pastor of a church in Charleston, S. C.); and when he came of age, adopted, like his father before him, the profession of a sailor; but on his second voyage, died in the West Indies, at the age of 22 or 23. And me she consigned, (after nursing in sorrow and weaning on tears,) to the care of my uncle Daniel, also a mariner, with whom at about 4 years of age, I removed to Newburyport. He died there, in 1829, aged 88. My uncle Jonathan died about 1807, I believe, at the house of a son-in-law, in Lewiston, Me., in extreme old age. My mother, whom I conducted to Gardiner in 1815, died there at my brother Ezekiel's in 1820, in her 81st year. Her younger brother, Wm. Tarbox, a baker in Newburyport, and a high Freemason, died in 1816 or '17, aged 76. My brother Ezekiel yet lives, at the advanced age of his 86th year. When about 2 years old, I fell from one of the wharves and was almost drowned. At the age of 11 or 12, in a winter school boy snow-and-ice-war, I lost the sight of my left eye. My aunt became my earliest preceptress, and taught me in Rev. Thomas Dyche's spelling-book, to spell and read; and thence advanced me into the key to Heaven, the Book of books, containing the most joyful, the most transporting tidings, the blessed

*New Testament*; and under her tuition I became a fluent reader, before I had ever entered a school house as a pupil. Then, though still very young, I began to attend the public schools of the town. At about ten years of age, I became a pupil of the high school, which was then, (and had been for a long series of previous years) under the superintendence of the celebrated *Nicolas Pike, Esq.* the author of a 'New and Complete System of Arithmetic;' thence I *booked it* under other teachers and scholiasts, in different seminaries; *fishing* anew in many a *troubled water* for *healing* knowledge; and *fare-ing* in proportion to my attention and diligence. I have been a student and a *teacher* in Massachusetts, New York and Maine, all my life long; am a student or a stumbler still; and shall such continue, I surmise, to the end of life, or of sight, or of mind, all of which are now not a little impaired. Like the Laputians, I may require a flapper, or like the archbishop of Grenada, a Gil Blas to apprise me when 'my pen, (my ample pen),' as *J. L.*, too flatteringly says, begins to smack of old age. My 'predictions as to the weather,' are based on various hypotheses, and the results of a series of comparisons of atmospherical tables constructed by some of our best natural philosophers."

And here is a touching incident in his life history, which reveals a charming trait in his character, found in the calendar page for September, 1857:—

"Love your mothers, sirs, if they be yet abiders here below—if passed away from this scene of sin and sorrow, toil and trouble, afflictions and anguish, cherish their memory evermore, with true and deep devotion in your heart of hearts; let their goodness and untiring kindness and forbearance be treasured up with affectionate remembrance in the purest recesses of your souls, to the

latest period of your existence. And never do ill, that good may come. I was separated from my dear mother in early childhood. I had not seen her, and my poor invalid sister, for nine or ten long years. I had so intense a desire, so longing a wish to receive once more her fond embrace — such a yearning of spirit to behold them both again, that on being sent to school, one morning, when about twelve or thirteen years of age, after going a short distance on my way, I at once faced about, and, taking another street, started off boldly on my lone way from Newburyport to Gloucester, a distance of over twenty-five miles, in quest of a mother's smile and kiss. On my tour, meeting a farmer 'in the pursuit of gain under difficulties,' (in Byfield or Rowley) with his load of hay upset, I tarried awhile, and gave him what assistance my feeble efforts could render. When, receiving his thanks, and directions as to my course, I renewed my travels, drinking of the brook by the way-side, but destitute of all food, till I safely reached her abode, and was clasped to the bosoms of my good mother and sister."

Mr. Robinson's great strength lay in his moral qualities and his faith in God was shown in his righteous life; he practised what he preached. The sincere soul, true to God, true to itself, and true to the best interests of humanity, will seldom fail to win the respect and esteem of men in this goodly land of New England; and thus it was that this true man gathered so many friends about himself and the Maine Farmers' Almanac. He had hearty words of sympathy for the cause of temperance, in behalf of the slave and the oppressed everywhere; for the promotion of a pure and lofty patriotism, for the reign of righteousness and peace, and in aid of every good work for the glory of God and the good of man. The Almanac was the first temperance tract ever circu-

lated in Maine, and so earnest and zealous was Mr. Robinson in his advocacy of total abstinence from all intoxicants and in denunciation of intemperance, that many of the local dealers, who sold the Almanac, complained to the publishers that it was injuring their business. While he was everything to the Almanac, the Almanac was everything to him, and his work upon it was a labor of love—a high and holy calling. The injunction of the Master, “Occupy till I come,” rested ever upon him; and the influence he exerted through his little annual, in all those forty-two years, who can compute? Listen to a specimen of his preaching in a lay sermon, in 1843:—

“Time *is*—time *was*—and time *is ended*—was the oracular response of Friar Bacon’s magical brazen head; and brother Miller, *without* a brazen head, however brilliant and solid it may be in other respects, is now, five centuries and a half later, echoing and re-echoing, the self-same terrific sentence, in the self-same dogmatical tone, concerning a period, the closing day and hour of which is known neither to *men* nor *angels*. It is, therefore, high time to awake out of sleep, to be up and doing, to seize Time by the forelock and make the most of him, ere *he* leaves *us* forever, or (which is *not* a matter of controversy, like brother Miller’s data and deductions, and will stand firmly, unpropped by our foregoing *therefore*,) ere we leave *him* forever, as it is certainly an indisputable fact that the very youngest of us all, no less than the oldest, may and must (at the farthest,) be summoned, in no long time to do. Be we, then, no longer procrastinators, no longer active in evil, and slothful in good, no longer greedy of pleasure and gain, thus transitory and insubstantial, nor averse from serious thought and solemn meditation, and sober life, and humility and meekness,



nor dissatisfied with our temporal allotments and stations. If the *end draweth nigh*, and full surely it doth, and is just at the threshold to many a one of us, it then resolutely behooves each of us, individually for himself, to be in earnest and anxious expectation of its coming to *one*, to *him*, to *all*, irrespectively of brother Miller's opinions and bulletins as to its arrival; and in earnest and anxious preparation to meet it with our work done, well done, and fully done, when it may be said of each of us:

‘Thou thy worldly task hast done,  
Home art gone and ta'en thy wages.’

Being lineally descended, not from the loins of kings or heroes, princes or nobles, but from the reverend and venerable John Robinson, the Puritan Pastor of the Leyden Pilgrims, who first landed on the Rock of Plymouth, and settled the wastes and wildernesses of New England, we feel at times as if an unction from the spirit of our loved and revered ancestor, had fallen upon our heart, and that it became us, if not to attempt, like him, to preach, yet, at the least to write ‘a word in season,’ to drop a mite of exhortation, to the young and the giddy, or, even to pen, however briefly or punily done, a something, be it but miss-shape or a shadow, in likeness to a ‘sermon by a layman.’ And therefore, gay and gallant reader! we beseech thee to bear gently with our garrulity, and take all our counsels in good part, since we can in all honesty assure thee, they are uttered in the spirit of candor, friendship, and truthfulness, in the hope of somewhat benefitting thy *mortal* and *immortal Being*. Let, then, the Time past suffice, wherein we have thought, spoken, or done wrong or evil, and let us, henceforth, strive for the things that may make for peace within our own hearts, and may promote its mild and blessed influences on all around us; redeeming the *Time*, because

the days are evil, and speaking the truth in love one to another, in all our intercourse of neighborhood and business. Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof. Be it then our endeavor, to diminish, not to increase it. May our peace be henceforth as a river, and our righteousness as the waves of the sea."

And then after something in relation to his aim as editor of an Agricultural Almanac, he adds :

"But we are not anxious, verily, to set traps to catch 'Folly as it flies,' though we would in no wise, hesitate at any time, to give it a shot, upon as little provocation, and with as little remorse, as the *Wises*, and the *other* wises of Congress and the race-courses compliment each other with their chivalrous salutes. We are no votaries of volatility; no coveters of comicality. Our lighter articles are all, we hope, somewhat more decorous than the desperate doings and erudite efforts, to elicit 'broad grins,' indicated by certain monstrosities, ycleped Comic Almanacs, &c. In those vapid abortions of fatuitous fancy, or fuddleus frenzy, the vilest misrepresentations of the human form are struck off in such doleful distortions, that disgusted spectators are very apt to mistake them for bears and baboons, in the spasms of 'kicking the bucket.' The most hideous antediluvian animal which was ever disinterred by geological perquisition, is beauty in the abstract, compared to some of the '*comic sketches*,' and novel illustrations, that are thrust upon us by boys and blockheads, loungers and loafers, hairy as Orson, (gents of unrazored lips and chins and goat-like phizzes, whose faces are put out of countenance) at every turn and corner, in the streets and sidewalks, the 'highways and byways,' of city, town, village and hamlet. But alas! 'the foolishness of fools is folly,' and the miserable show

of their 'comics,' as of their countenances, 'doth witness against them.'"

Mr. Robinson was a scholar, with an extensive knowledge of good books, including the best poetry extant in his day, for which he evidently had a keen relish and a correct taste as is shown by his quotations. He also knew men, and his hints and allusions all along his course, show that in his quiet country home, he was thoroughly alive to what was going on in the noisy world about him. Strict Puritan though he was, he possessed a rare and genial humor, and his writings abound in quaint quips and quiddities; but his kind heart forbade the use of his gift to wantonly inflict pain, though he did provoke laughter. As was said of another, "the keen blade of his wit never bore a heart stain." As illustrative of this side of his character, let me read you his apostrophe to laughter:

"Oh, glorious laughter! thou man-loving spirit, that for a time dost take the burden from the weary back, that dost lay salve to the feet, bruised and cut by flints and shards, that takest blood-baking melancholy by the nose, and makest it grin despite itself, that all the sorrows of the past, the doubts of the future, confoundest in the joy of the present, that makest man truly philosophic-conqueror of himself and of care! What was talked of as the golden chain of Jove, was nothing but a succession of laughs, a chromatic scale of merriment, reaching from earth to Olympus. It was not fire that Prometheus stole but the laughter of the gods, to deify our clay, and in the abundance of our merriment, to make us reasonable creatures. Have you ever considered, sir, what man would be, destitute of the ennobling faculty of laughter? Why, sir, it is to the face of man what sinovia, I think anatomists call it, is to his joints,

it oils and lubricates it, and makes the human countenance divine. Without it, our faces would have grown rigid, hyena like, the iniquities of our hearts, with no sweet to work upon them, would have made the face of the best among us a horrid, husky thing, with two sullen, hungry, cruel lights at the top, for foreheads would have then gone out of fashion, and a cavernous hole below the nose. Think of a babe without laughter; as it is, its first intelligence. The smile shows its divine origin and end."

As a specimen of his genial and inimitable gossip with correspondents, we present the following from the editor's Address in 1849: "Come, my young spark, Master Filus Forty-nine—thy Dad Forty-eight has vanished, and left thee alone in thy glory. Bear well in mind his last injunctions; thou art put on thy good behavior. Make thy leg; convey our thanks and good wishes to our patrons and friends; and urge our correspondents to be up and doing in the good cause—the cause of the Maine Farmer's Almanac. And here, overhaul these Notes of Admiration, Interrogation and Elucidation, and let us have the *ciphers* of the kindly company. *Hurrah*, [ay, he is one of the Mandarins of the many buttoned cap of the celestial empire.] *Dr. S. P. B.* [good now, *his* physic even we might swallow without making wry faces, though, in general, we dislike the stuff as heartily, to the full, as the *miserable* Macbeth;] *E. S. C., Omnibus, G. C., Mag, J. D., Miss Maria, Arcon, Hurrah*, again, *Otis*, [this is a name, my dear boy, borne by some of New England's pure and ardent patriots in the times that tried men's souls,] *Miss N. H., E. S., Calchas*, [soh! the famous Greek sooth-sayer, you know, my lad,] *Captain Roderigo* [probably a descendant from the Cid, the great Spanish hero,] *J. C. F., I-c-l-r* [he is our

Chevalier Bayard, without fear and without reproach — you mark me, boy.] *Hurrah* [a well-bosomed friend, truly in earnest, who has given us three cheers, but who hath wended his way of late, from China, the land of flowers, to Vassalboro', the land of loves,] *P. L. F., &c., &c., &c.* There, take a run."

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Friends, I thank you for the opportunity of addressing you in this way. I thank you, also, for the attention you have given me, the patience with which you have listened to this lengthy paper. Though Almanacs may live forever and conventions never cease, contributors, alas, grow old and die, and it is not probable that we shall all again greet each other in the body; but in closing, allow me to express the hope that when our work here is done, and for us all life's dark riddles are solved, we may meet where we shall know as we are known — when Time shall be no more, and Almanacs will not be needed.

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The venerable *Noemus*, the oldest Contributor present, then presented the poem which appears in subsequent pages.

*Hurrah* not being present, his paper on "Mechanics," next upon the programme, was of course omitted, but it is good enough to keep, and will be welcome next year; or, better still, it might be embodied in these proceedings, like many a congressional speech not spoken, which nevertheless goes into the record.

## Letters.

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The following letters from absentees were then read :

*C. E. Nash, Esq., Dear Sir :*

Will you have the kindness to express to the Convention of Contributors to the Maine Farmers' Almanac my regrets for unavoidable absence ; I am aware that nothing but the direst necessity can excuse such apparent delinquency for two years in succession ; but my time is not at my own command, and I simply bow to the inevitable. As you fully understand my situation, I must depend upon you to "let me down easy." And now, hoping that a goodly number will be in attendance, and that the bonds of friendly union will be strengthened thereby, I remain, as ever,

Most truly yours,  
THE EDITOR.

June 16, 1881.

AUGUSTA, June 17, 1881.

*My dear sir :—*

I came to Augusta last evening to attend to some business and to go to Hallowell this morning to be with the contributors to-day. But I am obliged to return home, called by a dispatch to attend to some professional business which I cannot postpone or have done by a substitute.

After declining the invitation of the Sons of Maine of Illinois to attend their celebration yesterday, in consequence of my engagement with my *confreres* of the Almanac, I am very bitterly disappointed in being obliged to forego my anticipated pleasure. Please make my regrets to those who are present, especially to Bro. Chase, (*Calchas*.)

Yours truly,

HURRAH.

*Fellow Contributors of the*

*Maine Farmers' Almanac:*

In consequence of a painful boil on my right hand, near the wrist joint, and other infirmities, it will be impracticable for me to be with you; which I much regret, as I anticipate a more numerous collection than we had last year, and hoped to make the acquaintance of many of the fraternity, whom I shall probably never see in this life; but my best wishes attend you all, wherever located.

In the bonds of friendship,

Yours truly,

PYTHAGORAS.

June 14th, 1881.

*Friends:*

As one who takes much interest in the Almanac, and a contributor of a few answers to the difficult puzzles, I regret that I cannot be present, at your Convention, but I send you my good will and wish that it may be a perfect success, as no doubt it will be.

Very truly,

H. J. LIBBY.

June 15, 1881.

In response to call for volunteer speeches, while waiting for dinner, interesting remarks were made by *Noemus*, *J. C. Friend*, *Calchas*, *Eureka*, *Tom Scott*, and *Elias Keene*, all expressing their pleasure in being present, and testifying to their interest in the Almanac. *Adrian*, though at first protesting the call, finally made a good speech of considerable length.

Major E. Rowell, an invited guest, a veteran printer and publisher, in response to call, made a brief but interesting talk, in the course of which he said he could hardly claim to be a "contributor," in the common acceptation of the term, and yet, in another sense he felt that he was an important one, for he had furnished, not a poem, but a poet; not a distinguished writer, but the material of which one might readily be made; he had contributed the present publisher, a faithful boy, and a faithful man, one of the best printer boys he ever had. He closed with expressions of hearty good will towards the Almanac and its friends.

Col. D. P. Livermore, being called up, gave, in a free, conversational way, some interesting reminiscences of the olden time, in the course of which he stated that Col. Masters had read the proofs and superintended the printing of the Almanac from its commencement, sixty-two years; and that he, Col. Livermore, had personally attended to the packing and distribution. Orders had been received, every year, he said, for single copies, from almost every State in the Union, for the mathematical department especially. In closing, he tendered the



hearty thanks of the publishers to the contributors for the valuable service they had rendered in making the Almanac so interesting and popular. It was very gratifying to the old publishers, he said, to know that this old favorite, with which they had had so much to do, was left in good hands.

The call to dinner compelled an adjournment, but after an hour pleasantly spent at the table, the company again returned to the parlor and resumed business.

*Zeno* proposed the formation of a permanent organization to ensure the perpetuity of the association — a secret society, with pass words, etc. ; but a little discussion made it apparent that while all were in favor of a permanent organization, a majority were opposed to secrecy or to cumbrous and complicated machinery. *Hurrah*, *J. C. Friend* and *Silent* were chosen a committee to prepare and present at the next annual meeting, a plan of organization, with the needed rules and regulations. And they were also empowered to act as a committee of arrangements, and directed to perfect their programme for the next meeting in season to have it published in the Almanac for 1882. It was also voted to change the time of holding the annual Convention to the second Wednesday in October.

Capt. Nash assured the Contributors, that coming at any time, they would be welcome, and every needed provision for their accommodation should be made.

## Valedictory.

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*Silent*, being then called upon, gave the following Valedictory:—

*Brother and Sister Contributors to the  
Maine Farmers' Almanac:—*

I have listened with great pleasure and interest to the exercises of the day, and will now try and add a few words as a *good bye*—and as a duty imposed upon me. The word *farewell* is a hard word to utter. This meeting and parting with friends, whether kindred or otherwise, brings to us a cup of joy intermingled with sadness which we all undoubtedly have tasted ere this.

Our brother last year thought women could talk best and *longest* just at the hour of parting. As a rule that may be so, but for myself I should prefer to always take a *Silent* leave. Be that as it may, the occasion that has caused this assemblage to-day is well understood by all present. For its novelty and oddity it has scarcely had a parallel so far as I know, with the exception of *that* last year, where the correspondents of a publication the size of the Almanac have put forth such an effort of both sexes and *nearly all ages* to have such a greeting with stranger friends, scarcely knowing each other's real

names, nationality, religious or political principles. And if we are never permitted to, our Almanac relations or signatures seem sufficient to bind us, *as it were*, fraternally; and let it be unto us a pledge, and let it be *iron clad*, that we shall be true to each other, and as for the dear old Almanac, that has stood the storms of sixty-two years, let us stand by that, *storm or no storm*.

It *matters* not if some who are not particularly interested in this department think it a business that don't pay much, perhaps they don't *understand* the business. It is an old adage that each heart knows its own *ache*,—each one of us knows of what *value* this is to us; we know its pleasures and trials, and those who know them most like them *best*.

There have been but few if any who have engaged in earnest but have followed it a *lifetime*. There were a few who started in but never became any more than *luke warm* and have wandered away. We'll say to those wanderers, *come back*. The influence must be on the ascending node for besides being driven to our wits, we have driven to the best books there are. Of course we are not all endowed with the same capacity, powers or tastes; *hence* comes the difference in our record. While some have a love for propounding, others seem just in their elements at solving or interpreting, &c. "All scripture is not the same scripture," and one star differs from another in glory. We cannot all expect to shine with equal brilliancy—any more than we can all have a trail to our dress "a yard long, more or less". We must each be contented to be taken for what *we are worth*. We have names upon the list to-day that have graced its pages nearly *half a century*; and were it not for being selfish or showing a disposition to rob *heaven* of its due, we should wish to *keep them there* as much longer. But

this would be wrong; better cultivate a spirit of resignation, and when the change comes, be prepared to meet it. We have already drank of the cup. From time to time we have been called to mourn the loss of dear Almanac friends; one after another has been *called away*. The last decade has taken some of its *venerable champions*. And a *last good bye* to their memory.

Just now, when the flowers are all in bloom,

Oh, that we could twine for each a wreath

And place it upon their tomb.

Since we are told that life and death are ours, let us not lose either. Make the most of the life with which we are favored for there are golden moments for us all, which when once lost are ir retrievable. Death, too, is ours; but by following that straight and easy path it may be robbed of its sting, and made glorious, and in a deeper sense, become to us a birth to a higher life. There are but a few, comparatively speaking, out of the *great whole* that cut their names into the *solid rock* and leave an abiding impression. A good person does this, and makes for himself an enduring memorial. This truly may be said of many who have left their names here, and *I* know not but all; and may *we try* to secure it, by living always so that any day will be a suitable or last day or any hearty hand shake a fitting *farewell*.

The moment of parting is very near, and its shadow is upon us. We have had our cup of joy and I trust it has been filled to the *brim*; had every member been present it must have *run over*. We have been welcomed and entertained in every way we can ask—speeches, poem, letters of cheer from absent friends, all in their turn, have served to make this meeting a success, but the *dearest part of all* is meeting those friends, "*face to face*." In our leave taking let us remember our editor,

who told us in 1865, that we were a thousand times welcome to the house room we occupy. For this very great privilege, in behalf of the correspondents to this department, I tender you our sincerest thanks, and for your untiring devotion to our amusements. Our thanks to all other friends who have honored us with their presence to-day; our sympathy to those who were detained by sickness or unavoidable circumstances; our love to the aged; and *nothing at all* to those who remained away without a reasonable excuse. It is not very probable we shall all meet again thus socially, but this meeting cannot be lost. Besides the pleasant remembrance of the personal acquaintances we have made that will be *lasting as life itself*, it will cause a great *waking up*; indeed a new interest has already been manifested, that seems like the dawn of a *new era*. And if the Maine Farmer's Almanac had its birth on the first day of January, 1819, it was born again June 2d, 1880.



Thanks were then voted as follows :

To *Eureka*, for his Address of Welcome.

To *Noemus* for his Poem.

To *A. E. Faught*, for his Opening Address.

To *Silent*, for her Valedictory.

To *R. D. W.*, for his Historical Paper ; and copies of these were requested for publication.

Thanks were also voted to Capt. Nash, for his generous hospitality and courteous treatment.

At the suggestion of *Adrian*, the veteran *Noemus* was chosen Poet Laureate of the Convention.

And now the hour of adjournment having come, the Contributors parted with kind wishes for each others' welfare, and went their several ways, all agreeing that they had had a very pleasant time, and mentally resolving that, Providence permitting, they would all be present at the Convention next year. So mote it be.



## A Poem.

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By "Noemus," (Hon. Noah Barker, of Exeter Mills, Me.)

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*Noemus* being called on responded as follows:

*Mr. Chairman and Fellow Contributors to the  
Maine Farmers' Almanac:*

In response to this complimentary call, I may say in the language of Lord Chesterfield, "I am very sure that any man of common understanding may, by culture, care, attention and labor, make himself whatever he pleases, except a great poet."

"*Poeta nascitur, non fit;*"

The poet is born, not made;—

It requires *native genius*, and wit,

For a bard of superior grade.

The bard takes an aerial flight,

To bestow on fair *Venus* a kiss;

Then peeps out, through the curtains of night,

And describes the surroundings, like this:

"The Evening, for her bath of dew,

Is partially undressed;

The Sun, behind a bobtailed flush,

Is setting in the west.

The Planets light the heavens, with

The flash of their cigars:

The Sky has put its night-shirt on,

And buttoned it with stars."

[This may pass for a specimen of "modern poetry," whether off, or from, the subject under consideration.]

But, being too old to go chasing the Nine,  
 The position of *poet*, I choose to decline;  
 For, as "*poet*" means *maker, inventor*, so those  
 Wanting skill to *invent*, may as well stick to prose.  
 To the skill of a poet, I make no pretense,  
 For no poet am I, in its *primary* sense;  
 Still, I jingle in rhyme, as we jingle a bell,  
 And bid those that discard it, to go straight to—well,  
 It is no matter *where*, if they can't take a joke,  
 Like a flash from a flint—a mere spark without smoke,—  
 Not a dead leaden bullet, discharged from a gun,  
 But the wit that will hit, fired merely for fun.

It will be recollected that, at our Convention here, one year ago, the remark was made by our facetious companion, "V. A. S.," that "the year 1818 was remarkable for two events—the birth of the MAINE FARMERS' ALMANAC, and also of *himself*."

That remark was aptly, and truthfully made;—but if he had gone back, in his chronology, eleven years farther, he might have found a year remarkable for several events, which were nearly, if not quite, as momentous as the ones named; such, for instance, as the birth of the first *Steam-boat* in America; and then the birth of the poet *Longfellow*, a native of our own "Dirigo State;" next followed, in the same year, (as if in answer to the great demand for still "more light,") the birth of *Gas* for illuminating the streets of London; and then, immediately following the introduction of *gas*, was the birth of *Noemus*, which, to *him*, was the crowning event of the year, and to which this convention is indebted for these *gassy* remarks.



*Noemus* first found himself in a log cabin, in the wilds of Maine, where he was born, A. D., 1807; and so well satisfied is he with his birth-place, and parentage, that if he were to be "born again," and could have any voice in the matter, he would rather be born in the same humble cabin, and of the same dear old Roman Mother; (who, by the way, was but eighteen years older than himself,) than in a king's palace, with the queen, herself, for his mother.

The birth of *Noemus* dates back, therefore, to the year *one*, A. L. (Anno Lucis, or in the Year of Light,) that is, "Gas Light."

"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." . . . . .

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

Having thus "prefaced old rags with plush," I will proceed to the task assigned me.

## POEM.

### I.

With no martial display, save our *Howitzer's* rattle,  
 We are peacefully met on this glorious morn,—  
 On this grand anniversary of Bunker Hill battle,  
*Fought* before *Uncle Sam*, or *Columbus* was born:  
 When our Fathers took rank in the march of progression,  
 And declared, then and there, they would die, or be free,  
 Shaking off the vile shackles of British oppression,  
 To repose in the shelter of Liberty's tree.

## II.

But the battle, though won, was not free from disaster;—  
In the fall of brave WARREN who fought with a *will*,  
The MASONIC FRATERNITY lost a GRAND MASTER,  
And our "Spartans" their General, near Bunker Hill.  
On the brow of this hill, in the tumult and flurry,  
A rude grave was soon dug, by the patriot whigs,  
Where the "body", all mangled, was thrown in a hurry,  
And the spot marked by—only a "cluster of sprigs".

## III.

While no glaring inscriptions his virtues emblazon,  
Still his memory lives, with the Nation's applause;  
So, we'll honor the chieftain, the worthy Free Mason,  
Who laid down his life to aid Liberty's cause.  
As we've no inclination to give an oration,  
But to offer some rhymes on a favorite theme,  
We'll dismiss the old heroes who founded this nation,  
While we cherish their virtues, with heart-felt esteem.

## IV.

Come we now to the subject directly before us,  
To the MAINE FARMERS' ALMANAC, with its allies,  
With a song that its patrons may all sing in chorus,  
And the one that excels, be deserving a prize.  
Like the mussulmans' pilgrimage, yearly, to Mecca,  
To offer their penance for penal offence,  
So our annual meetings, at old Kennebec, a  
Resort shall be for us, whate'er the expense.

## V.

Oh, how joyous, my friends, is the family meeting,  
When brothers and sisters meet at the old shrine,  
Where their hearts are made glad, by a cordial greeting,  
To renew "auld acquaintance," and "spier o'lang syne"!   
And so we meet to-day, as old friends, and yet strangers,  
Unknown to each other, by *genuine* name;  
A Fraternity, like the Free-masons, and Grangers,—  
A Brotherhood rising to honor and fame.

## VI.

WINTER EVENING AMUSEMENTS show signs of our thumbings,  
As our bright DRUMMOND lights set the evenings ablaze,  
For, with all our out-GOWENS, we've many in-CUMMINGS,  
That are justly deserving a tribute of praise;—  
COMINS in from the CHASE, from the palace and cottage,  
All the ADAMS and EVES, from the FIELD and the LANE,  
And not one that his birthright would barter for pottage—  
Not even PEASE pottage, we FISH from the CRANE.

## VII.

What though our pursuits may add less to our purses  
Than is gathered by those who make gods of their gold,  
Yet, while *filthy lucre* to mortals a curse is,  
Wit, wisdom, and knowledge are treasures untold.  
Let extortioners gloat on their ill-gotten treasure,  
Looking at us askance, with contemptuous eye,  
Yet, to solve a dark problem affords us a pleasure  
That not all the wealth of a Cræsus could buy!

## VIII.

Let the laborers struggling in life's field of battle,  
Where dangers and pitfalls so constantly lurk,  
Withhold their exertions, nor longer be cattle,  
But pass labor by with a smile and a smirk.  
For, the money, we find, goes to those who are bossing,—  
To the banker, the usurer, Shylock and shirk,  
While those that are delving, and digging, get nothing,  
Save the plainest of fare, and the hardest of work.

## IX.

So, we puzzlers, hereafter, will deem it no stigma,  
Over intricate questions, and puzzles, to pore,  
Or outvie the Greek Sphinx, whose ingenious Enigma  
Has to us been transmitted, through mythical lore.  
The Sphinx, we are told, once propounded a riddle—  
As she sat on a rock—unto all that passed by,  
And the moment one failed, the hard knot to unriddle,  
That moment she doomed the delinquent to die.

## X.

When the Thebans thus found their best citizens "going,"  
 They immediately formed a "political ring,"  
 And proposed to one Œdipus, deemed the most knowing,  
 If he'd answer the riddle they'd make him their king.  
 So, rememb'ring the adage: *Try never was beaten*;  
 He resolved to make trial, at once, hit or miss,—  
 And approaching the rock that the Sphinx had her seat on,  
 She gave him her riddle, substantially this:

## XI.

"A being, with four feet, has two feet, and three feet,  
 And though its feet vary, 'tis weakest with four;—  
 It has but one voice, and its food *eats* as we eat,—  
 Now expound my enigma, or breathe never more:"  
 "It is MAN," answered Œdipus:—"In his *first stages*,  
 Man, like the young quadruped, crawls on all fours;  
 Stands, *in manhood*, erect, on two feet;—*in old age*, is  
 Upheld by his staff, as in stature he lowers."

## XII.

So enraged was the Sphinx at his ready solution,  
 That she threw herself down from the rock, with a spring,  
 While Œdipus safely escaped execution,  
 And, according to promise, was crowned as their king.  
 Let us emulate, therefore, the mythical Œdipus;  
 Whose name lives immortal, in tragical song,  
 And, in solving dark sayings, let none go ahead of us,  
 But be sure our solutions are *right*, and not wrong.

## XIII.

But what knottier riddle can man stay his thought on,  
 Mid the bustle and tussle for power and pelf,  
 Than the old Grecian maxim, "*Gnothi se auton*,"—  
 Latined, "*Nosce teipsum*," *id est*, "Know thyself?"  
 Know thyself, thou strange *triune* of god, man and devil,  
 The Brahma, the Vishnu, and Siva, combined,  
 Creator, preserver, destroyer,—this *evil*  
 Making *trine* of the dual of matter and mind.

## XIV.

When man knows himself, he discovers his weakness,—  
 A knowledge essential, no doubt, to us all,—  
 When he looks at himself, in the mirror of meekness,  
 He beholds but a dwarf, inf'n'tesimally small.  
 Let him then take his Almanac — carefully scan it—  
 Think how worlds upon worlds are all held in control,  
 The Sun and fixed stars kept in place, like the planet,  
 And the satellites helping to balance the whole!

## XV.

The Almanac furnishes food for reflection,  
 Instructive, alike, to the young and the old;  
 And so wide in its range, each may make his selection  
 Of whatever theme he desires to unfold.  
 As, within the same meadow, the *stork* snaps the *lizzard*,  
 The *cow* crops the *grass*, and the *dog* starts a *hare*,  
 So each Almanac reader, from A down to *Izzard*,  
 May select what he likes, and leave others *their* share.

## XVI.

No person is bound by a shackle or muzzle,  
 But free to select what delights him the best,  
 One making a riddle, one solving a puzzle,  
 While others delight in a quirk, or a jest.  
 Some sheltered in palaces, others in attics,  
 Some seeking for wisdom, and others for fun,  
 Some happy in delving in dry mathematics,  
 And others as happy in making a pun.

## XVII.

So *Man*, all in all, is a queer *contradiction*,  
 A *nut* quite too hard for the puzzler to crack,  
 A *conjurer*, showing "*truth* stranger than *fiction*,"  
 A *time-piece* that gains, and requires setting back.  
 A *magnetic needle*, with much *variation*,  
 So that when his *departure's* too small or too great,  
 He reverses his *courses* from station to station,  
 Till his eastings and westings compare on the slate.

## XVIII.

But, if *Man* is a riddle, then pray, what is *Woman*,  
 But a puzzle of puzzles to puzzle the brain,  
 A *hybrid* between the angelic and human,  
 A *surd*, indeterminate, few can explain.  
 The *mainspring*, that keeps the world's Time-piece in motion,  
 The force by which spheres in their orbits are whirled;  
 So, who will not say she's a queer "Yankee notion,"  
 The glory, the jest, and the pride of the world!

## XIX.

She's the *magnet*, that draws by the power of attraction,  
 Yet as strongly repels from the negative pole,  
 And, as man's *better-half*, she's an "improper fraction,"  
 Which is greater reduced, than a *unit*, or *whole*.  
 In "extraction of roots," she's the *radical figure*,  
 And the smaller the index, the larger the root;  
 Like a corn on the toe, growing bigger and bigger,  
 The smaller and tighter the shoe to the foot.

## XX.

Ho! put on the brake! or this *poetique mach'-ine*  
 May get under such headway, she'll run us to — HEL-  
 LESPONT, helterskelter, haphazard, and smash in  
 Our "cocoa-nut" shell, as she rushes pell-mell! —  
 But no use! we're dead-beat! — let her run, let her go it,  
 Like old Nick, in pursuit of his victim, or pelf;  
 And *Noemus* be left, as to aping the "poet",  
 Like the school-boy's whistle, that *whistled itself*.

## XXI.

So we'll here start anew, with the hope to do better,  
 But, if one of the Muses should proffer her aid,  
 Then perhaps, we might deem it an object to let her,  
 Although hazardous wooing so fickle a jade.  
 But let her 'play off', and we'll rhyme it without her,  
 And, as in the past, do the best that we can,  
 For, while we know *little* and care *less* about her,  
 We feel it is safest to stick to "hard pan".

## XXII.

Let the saw, *Meden agan*, or "Too much of nothing,"—  
Still remain the dead language of primitive Greece!  
And while mad politicians are foaming and frothing,  
We would say, with Ulysses, pray "Let us have peace."  
You will pardon, I trust, this politic allusion,  
For, like Masons, we're bound to no faction, or creed,  
Since Religion and Politics lead to confusion,  
Let us stick to that Faith in which all are agreed.

## XXIII.

Let our weapon be *Satire*, like Pope, Alexander,  
But "curst be the verse that turns friend into foe,"  
Nor should we descend to turn *Satire* to *Slander*,  
Or hit an offender a back-handed blow.  
But when an offender commits a gross folly,  
Till we hit him in rhyme, we can seldom find rest,  
But, whatever may happen, we'll laugh and be jolly,  
And even grow *fat* on the *cream* of a *jest*.

## XXIV.

There's a Fish, as they tell us in "schools" often playing,  
That prefers the "dark waters," with "shad"ows aboon,  
And we find its seclusion confirms the old saying,  
That "Fish bite the best on the dark of the moon."  
Since the name of our "Fish" is extremely precarious,  
Not appearing in "Pisces," twelfth Zodiac Sign,  
Let us wait 'till the rivers are raised by "Aquarius,"  
When, perhaps, he'll engorge a sly hook on the line.

## XXV.

Make allowance, my friends, for an old man's loquacity,  
While he pictures old scenes in the country, when new,  
And we trust that none present will doubt his veracity,  
When backed up by old annals substantially true;  
Dating back to the time when our farms were a wild wood,  
When the Bear and the Wolf took the sheep from their fold,  
Contrasting late fashions with those of our childhood,—  
Or, in other words, treating on "things new and old."

## XXVI.

We "old boys" still remember the days of our youth,  
 When on horseback we rode, and our sweethearts behind us,  
 When the *troth* that we plighted was taken for *truth*,  
 And no oath, before magistrate, stronger could bind us.  
 Who can ever forget that green silken "calash,"  
 Or the rosy-cheeked damsel, with blushes inside it,  
 When our pulses beat quick, and our hearts "went to smash,"  
 And, in fact, were "gone suckers," and no way to hide it!

## XXVII.

But this love-making business is hard to unfold,  
 As the song says: "Tis something you can't well explain;"  
 Sometimes you are ardent, sometimes you are cold,—  
 'Tis a medley, a mixture of pleasure and pain.  
 On a time, we got caught in Love's intricate net,  
 By a charming young creature with beautiful phiz,  
 And, in fact, we have hardly got out of it yet,—  
 But then you who have been there, know just how it is. (\*)

## XXVIII.

We can never forget that high copple-crown comb,  
 Looming up like a cupola stuck on a mansion,—  
 The vandykes, and chintz gowns worn by girls, out from home,  
 With their plackets and gores, but no flounce nor expansion.  
 Do you mind it, the thick-leather shoes that they wore,  
 When they danced, with their "fellows," the old "Double  
 Shuffle,"  
 Singing "Peggy and Molly," and "Rora O'More,"—  
 Some dancing the "Pigeon wing,"—some in a scuffle!

---

(\*) "Say, what would you give for a look

Through a book,

Containing each word from the lips of a human,

In his billing and cooing,

In his efforts at wooing

The heart of a woman,

Since Adam first plucked up the courage to lead on,

And court that old girl in the garden of Eden?

When my hurry is over, with plenty of time,

I am going to write such a volume in rhyme.

— *My First Courtship.*



## XXIX.

Oh! "carry me back" to that native simplicity,—  
 To the jolly old times of the "Jig," and the "Song,"—  
 When they sang, danced, and whistled old "Rural Felicity,"—  
 When the *gist* of a dance, was to "pop her down," strong.  
*Then*, no spindle-legged popinjays, e'en for a minute,  
 Could withstand the young giants there were in those days,  
 And our wasp-waisted girls would "collapse," and "fall in it"  
 Leaving nothing behind, but their skeletal "stays."

## XXX.

And such were the times when our Almanac started,—  
 Before the old "District of Maine" was a State,—  
 And of such were its founders and patrons departed  
 To the City Celestial, and entered the gate.  
 The old honest Maine farmer—the plodding "plough-jogger,"  
 In his tow frock and trowsers, so tidy and neat,  
 Though he lived in the days of the "gouge" and "pod-auger,"  
 Never dreamed that the "gouge" meant a "fraud," or a  
 "cheat."

## XXXI.

What a change, since our Almanac's primal existence!  
 Ah! where can be found so prolific a theme?—  
 We no longer need Time to o'ercome space, or distance,  
 Since our thoughts go by lightning—our bodies by steam!  
 But, while many admire these improvements, so novel,  
 They're attended with evils the Christian might scorn,  
 And prefer to go back to the humble log hovel,  
 With its clay-catted chimney—to where he was born:

## XXXII.

When the roads were but toe-paths, and people rode saddle  
 nags,  
 And the "settlers," on horseback to market would come,  
 With a "cag" in each end of the old-fashioned saddle-bags,  
 Their "essentials" to buy—Tea, Tobacco, and Rum.  
 For, in those days, a man would be thought mean, and *stingy*,  
 Who his parson, or neighbor to treat would refuse,  
 When a quart of "New England," or less of "West-India,"  
 Would make them all happy, and richer than Jews!

## XXXIII.

Then, no one ever heard of a "search," or a "seizure,"  
 For every man minded his own business *then*,—  
 Did his work, tended worship, and found time for leisure,—  
 Good "every-day Christians"—both *women* and *men*;—  
 A people supporting themselves by their labor,—  
 Enjoying the fruits of their labor, in love,  
 When each hailed with joy, the good luck of his neighbor,  
 Nor if happ'ning to slip, try to give him a shove.

## XXXIV.

*Then*, the traffic of farmers was mainly in "barter,"  
 Whether one dealt on "credit," or chose to "pay down,"  
 When a lady's "elastic" was simply her "garter,"  
 And people's apparel, plain "breeches" and "gown."  
*Then*, was *marriage* regarded a "life-long alliance,"  
 And the parties were taken "for better or worse;"  
*Now* the Law, and the Gospel, are set at defiance,  
 And the late wedded couple obtaining divorce!

## XXXV.

*Then*, would worshipers meet in a neighbor's log-kitchen,—  
 In their midst, the GREAT SHEPHERD, as promised, of old,  
 To succor the lambs that had fallen, the ditch in,  
 And gather them tenderly, into the fold. (†)  
*Then*, CHARITY opened her hands to the *needy*,  
 To the poor and down-trodden, the sick and the lame,  
 Nor denounced one "a tramp," though his garments were  
 "seedy,"  
 Nor flattered the "rich," nor aspired after fame.

---

(†) "To build the towering church and spire,  
 God's people were not able,  
 And so, to hear their humble prayer,  
 The Lord would meet them anywhere—  
 In kitchen, grove, or stable."

— *My First Courtship.*

## XXXVI.

*Then*, the young, to their elders, were found reverential,  
Girls making their courtesies — boys doffing the hat,  
When the starch in a dickey was deemed unessential,  
While the *man*, though in rags, was a *man* for all that.  
*Then*, his "worth" was not weighed by the "almighty dollar,"  
By the depth of his purse, nor the style of his coat,—  
For *no* man, that *was* a man, wore a "dog collar,"  
Nor would cringe to the nabob demanding his vote.

## XXXVII.

But *now*, when a false-hearted hypocrite sees us  
In Adversity's grasp—children crying for bread,  
With a sanctified face, he refers us to Jesus,  
Who, on earth, had no place where to pillow his head.  
And thus he proceeds to relate the sad story,  
With a hypocrite's cant, and a crocodile tear,  
How Jesus, before he ascended to glory,  
Had to "tramp," like a beggar, all over Judea!

## XXXVIII.

What a wonderful boon! What a sweet consolation!  
What a timely relief to one starving in pain!  
To be told that the Author of human salvation  
Was, at one time, an hungered, and plucked ears of grain!  
Woe unto such hypocrites, wolves in sheep's clothing!  
Who, when orphans ask bread, turn them off with a stone!  
Heaven spare us the sight of an object so loathing—  
And if Beelzebub claims them, he claims but his own.

## XXXIX.

When reclining at eve, in the twilight's soft gloaming,  
The music all hushed, and the busy world still,  
Then I dream of the past, as in dream-land I'm roaming,  
Where I see the "log cabin" that stood on the hill,—  
Close beside the snug hovel, where lambkins were bleating  
For a shelter, secure from the sleet and the snow,  
And I start, in my dream, to bestow a kind greeting  
To the loving, and loved ones there, long, long ago.

## XL.

There I see my dear mother while busily knitting  
The socks for us children—full many pair—  
And while snuggled around her, the children are sitting,  
She looks anxiously on them, with motherly care.  
And I see my dear father, by candle light reading  
From the Family Bible—a group round his knee—  
And I still hear his voice, while in prayer he is pleading  
For God's kind protection — “from sin be made free.”

## XLI.

Then I see, in that cabin, well recognized faces  
Of the brothers and sisters, when “all were at home,”  
As around the old table we all took our places,  
In the days ere we learned from each other to roam.  
Could I know that those scenes were reserved for the morrow,  
And could meet the old friends that I once used to know,  
Oh, how gladly my heart would endure every sorrow,  
While rehearsing this dream of the long, long ago!

## XLII.

But we know that, in this life, our pleasures are fleeting,  
And our day of probation is short, at the best,  
So, this may, to some of us, be our last meeting,  
Till we finally meet where the weary find rest.—  
And now, thanking you, friends, for your patient attention,—  
For I feel, in my heart, I've detained you too long,—  
The forgiveness I crave of this worthy Convention,  
If a word I have dropped, that may seem to be wrong.

## XLIII.

When the shortness of life, and its trials we think on,—  
Being only a span from the swaddle to shroud,—  
We are led to exclaim, as did President Lincoln,  
“O, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?”—  
When death's portal we reach, and the “Great Lights” diminish,  
May we still have our pass-words, signs, tokens and grips,  
May the last spoken language of earth be the “Finnish,”  
And the “shadow of death” but a “*Partial Eclipse*.”

## Obituary.

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*Died*, in Hallowell, on the morning of November 7th, 1881, COL. ANDREW MASTERS, aged 87 years and 6 months.

Col. Masters had been confined to his house for about two weeks by a cold and the debility incident to old age. Sunday, the 6th of November, he speedily grew worse, and the end soon came,—but not wholly unexpectedly to his family and the attending friends.

The funeral was held on Wednesday afternoon, November 9th. Rev. C. A. White, pastor of the South Congregational Church of Hallowell, conducted the services at the house. A large number of friends and neighbors were present to pay their tribute of love and respect to the memory of the good man. The brethren of Kennebec Lodge, No. 5, and the companions of Jerusalem Royal Arch Chapter, were in attendance in regalia, and conducted the impressive burial service of their order at the grave.

Col. Masters was born in Exeter, New Hampshire, in the year 1794. When thirteen years old, he entered a

printing office in Exeter and served an apprenticeship of seven years, thoroughly learning the art as taught in those days. He then left his native town to find employment, and went to Boston, where he remained about a year. Not content with the life of a journeyman printer in a large city, he left Boston in 1815, for Hallowell, which was then one of the most flourishing towns in the District of Maine. He engaged as printer in the office with which he was identified from that time until he retired from business in May, 1880. He became a partner in the book publishing and binding business in 1820, under the firm name of Goodale, Glazier & Co. This firm and those which have for sixty-two years consecutively succeeded it, have published a large number of valuable books,—legal, educational, and philosophical. The printing of the Maine Reports, which was begun by this house in the early years of the State, is still carried on in the Almanac office, volumes 71 and 72 having been issued therefrom during the year 1881.

Col. Masters was strongly attached to his chosen art and profession. For sixty-five years, from 1815, he was diligently at his place of business; and it may be said that comparatively few days passed when he did not spend a part of them at the case with stick and rule setting type. Idleness was to him unrest. He personally superintended the composition, proof-reading and printing of every book issued from the office during his long business career. The printing of each number of the Maine Farmers' Almanac from 1819 to 1880, was under his special supervision. Blessed with a good constitu-

tion and a happy temperament, and observing all the laws of health, he was seldom detained from his accustomed place by illness; and was spared to enjoy life and be a comfort to his family and friends, and a blessing to the community, much longer than the commonly allotted term of life.

In 1821, Col. Masters married Sarah Phipps Livermore, sister of Col. Danforth P. Livermore who was for many years his business partner. She died in 1840, leaving five children, only one of whom, a daughter, is now living. He subsequently married, in 1842, Ruth C. Carr, who survives him. He was a devoted husband, father and guardian,—kind, gentle and indulgent.

Since early manhood he was a professor of religion, and a member and pillar of the South Congregational Church of Hallowell. His life was wholly consistent with his profession, and a bright example to the world.

He filled many important places of trust in the community where he passed his life. He was for many years treasurer of the Hallowell Academy, a once noted institution of learning; he was a director of the Northern Bank of Hallowell, and of the Northern National Bank which succeeded it; and also of the Hallowell Savings Institution. Under the first militia law of the State,—soon after 1820, he was Lieutenant Colonel of the regiment of artillery which was composed of the Hallowell, Waterville, Readfield and Monmouth companies, and thus received the military title by which he was afterwards addressed.

He was a Free Mason for more than sixty years, having been raised in Kennebec Lodge No. 5, previous to 1820. He was exalted to the degree of Royal Arch Mason, April 16, 1821. He was several times Master of Kennebec Lodge, and was H. P. of Jerusalem Royal Arch Chapter in 1828, and 1846. He took a lively interest in matters pertaining to the good of the craft, and was loved by all the brethren.

His convictions were strong concerning what he considered right and wrong, and he always cherished and maintained them without vacillation or compromise. His mind was of the conservative order. In political views he was a democrat,—of the old school. His purity of life and dignity of character were so conspicuous that at the times when party rancor and abuse prevailed, he was always let alone by his opponents, though he never shrank from taking honorable part in party work. He was a man of extreme modesty, and never sought political or public positions,—and never would accept the former, though many times in the course of his life urged so to do by his friends.

Col. Masters enjoyed in the highest degree the respect and esteem of his fellow citizens, and of all who knew him. Kind hearted, benevolent, conscientious, and upright in all his dealings, it seems to the writer that his life, unlike the lives of the most of the children of men, is worthy of complete imitation.

“Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.”

“All that live must die,  
Passing through nature to eternity.”











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